GETTING TO NO (NUCLEAR WEAPONS) WITH IRAN: WILL COERCIVE DIPLOMACY WORK?

A Monograph

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14. ABSTRACT
The Islamic Republic of Iran seems devoted to developing a nuclear weapon. The nation's dedication to the revolutionary regime and self-sufficiency makes Iran difficult to coerce. Iran and the United States stand at cross-purposes regarding nuclear weapons where the latter seeks options to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. The United States uses coercive diplomacy to pursue this end. Despite these efforts, evidence suggests Iran continues to move closer toward the capability while raising question regarding remaining options available to deny it. A review of conditions favorable to coercive diplomacy and consideration of the current elements of the strategy highlight gaps. The review also elucidates additional options to better address strategic ends, but with greater risk. Unless a grand bargain is attainable, the U.S. must likely accept this heightened risk or prepare to shift to a deterrence posture.

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ABSTRACT

GETTING TO NO (NUCLEAR WEAPONS) WITH IRAN: WILL COERCIVE DIPLOMACY WORK? by MAJ James O. Turner, United States Army, 69 pages.

Currently, the Islamic Republic of Iran seems devoted to developing a nuclear weapon. It sees itself as an ascending power in both the Middle East and the world. Furthermore, experience with the west and recent examples of regime change in the region concern Iran. The nation's dedication to perpetuating the revolutionary regime and self-sufficiency makes Iran a difficult candidate for coercion. Conversely, its rhetoric and history of activities that run counter to international norms concern other members of the global community. Desire to see a world free of nuclear weapons and apprehensions of regional instability set Iran and the United States at cross-purposes where the United States seeks options to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

The United States uses a strategy of coercive diplomacy to pursue a policy whereby the Islamic Republic of Iran does not become nuclear-armed. Despite this decade long endeavor, evidence suggests Iran continues to move ever closer toward such a capability. Questions continue to arise regarding the ability of the U.S. or any other party to coerce Iran. A review of conditions favorable to coercive diplomacy as well as consideration of the current ways and means of the strategy highlight gaps in the strategy. Concomitantly, this review elucidates additional options that may better address strategic ends, but likely with a substantial increase in risk. Unless an unspoken grand bargain is attainable, the U.S. must likely accept exceptionally greater risk or prepare to shift to a deterrence posture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Iran's continued enrichment of uranium coupled with its refusal to allow the International

Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) to inspect dubious locations associated with the nuclear

program suggest current United States (U.S.) policy might prove unattainable with the existing

strategy. Thus far, efforts to halt Iran's progress toward a nuclear weapons capability have failed

to achieve their goals.[1] However, a narrow opportunity to avert broad-scale war or accept a

nuclear-armed Iran might remain. This opportunity requires decisive, holistic action that

incorporates all elements of national power and broadens the current approach within the

framework of a unifying construct.

Research Question

Given no change in existing U.S. policy, what options remain to prevent Iranian

achievement of a nuclear weapons capability short of broad-scale military action? The most

plausible solution to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon short of broad-scale military

action will demand an approach with expanded ways and means that capitalizes on yet unrealized

contributions of the military, which can create effects that buy additional time and provide

positional advantage.[2] As such, the U.S. must undertake targeted actions to de-link the regime's

perception that its survival requires a nuclear deterrent as halting the program indefinitely will

require a change in the will of the Iranian leadership. Activities to accomplish this end must go

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[1]Board of Governors, *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran* (New York: International Atomic Energy Association, 2013), http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2013/gov2013-6.pdf (accessed 20 March 2013).

[2]Everett C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 6.

beyond the typical "menu of options"[3] and galvanize efforts across the elements of national

power to develop a holistic approach that can achieve policy objectives.[4] Short of this, the U.S.

must look to posture itself to deter, compel, or contain Iran.[5]

<p style="text-align:center">Background</p>

U.S. policy toward the Iranian nuclear program has changed little since the first inklings

of its pursuits in the post-revolution era.[6] Under the current administration, the United States

continues to assert that it will not accept a nuclear-armed Iran and will use all options available to

prevent such a reality. However, periodic reports by the IAEA as well as assertions from Israel

and other regional nations suggest current efforts are not achieving the desired objectives. This

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[3]The term "menu of options" commonly refers to a pick board of ideas from which to choose. In the case of Iran individual small-scale choices are unlikely to work. The orchestration of linked and synchronized actions are necessary to achieve policy objectives.

[4]Richard A. Chilcoat, "Strategic Art: The New Discipline for 21st Century Leaders," 10 October 1995, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, iii. Chilcoat defines strategic art as "the skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends (objectives), ways (courses of action), and means (supporting resources) to promote and defend the national interests." He continues by explaining the coordination of the effects brought by the various elements of national power to pursue national interests.

[5]Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 12. Pape defines deterrence as "to persuade a state not to initiate a specific action because the perceived benefits do not justify the estimated costs and risks." Thomas S. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 70. Schelling explains compellence offering it as a threat that "requires the punishment be administered until the other acts." X (pseudonym for George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (July 1947): 576. Speaking of the Soviet Union, Kennan describes containment as "adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and manoeuvres [sic] of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence."

[6]Executive Order No.12938 from November 14, 1994 captures the general national security threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Executive Order No. 12957 from March 15, 1995 speaks specifically of U.S. sanctions on Iran. The American Enterprise Institute's Iran tracker captures the generally held belief that, although the two executive orders do not mention Iran and WMD together, the documents are complimentary and speak to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. The Iran Tracker is available online at http://www.irantracker.org/us-policy/us-policy-toward-irans-nuclear-program (accessed 21 March 2013).

raises questions regarding the limits the United States will go to reach policy fulfillment.

Following 12 years of active combat in the region, it will prove difficult to muster the political

will and public support necessary for a military incursion. It also seems apparent that options

grow more limited by the day. If Iran continues advancement toward a nuclear weapons

capability and the United States continues to view this as a national security threat, the U.S. must

broaden its means and ways or strongly consider decisive military action in the near term.

The United States considers Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons a serious threat to national

security.[7] Beyond the direct threat to U.S. interests in the region, Iranian possession of nuclear

weapons holds the potential to destabilize the Middle East. The wariness Sunni-led nations such

as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or Turkey have toward Shia-dominated Iran might spawn a

regional nuclear arms race if the Islamic Republic proves successful.[8] Likewise, Iran continues to

support terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The passage of nuclear materials to

these or another terrorist organization would heighten international concerns. Additionally,

Iranian possession of a nuclear weapon would raise questions regarding U.S. commitment to

Israeli security giving others a perceived green light to heighten aggression.[9] Summarily, this

situation suggests a serious threat with global implications as the international community

continues to look to the region as a major energy supplier.

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[7]Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010), 4.

[8]Barack Obama, "Remarks of President Barack Obama to the People of Israel" (sermon, Jerusalem International Convention Center, Jerusalem, Israel, 21 March 2013), http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/21/remarks-president-barack-obama-people-israel (accessed 23 July 2013).

[9]John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007). The U.S. maintains a long commitment to the security of Israel. Israel considers Iranian possession of nuclear weapons as an existential threat. Iran development and possession of a weapon, without U.S. intervention, would create immense strain on its relationship with its best regional partner and bring political pressure to bear domestically. Mearsheimer and Walt make an excellent case highlighting the influence Israel has in U.S. politics.

To varying degrees, the U.S. has sought a world free of nuclear weapons for nearly 30 years. This standing policy stems from myriad reasons the most important of which is the destruction these weapons cause.[10] The memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain distant, but still highlight the ruin left in the wake of even a small nuclear detonation.[11] Modern nuclear weapons hold the power to eliminate entire races of peoples or nations and render lands unusable for centuries to come. Hence, when surveying the broader landscape they stand as an existential threat to all nations and Iran's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons reignites this concern.

In light of U.S. goals and the marginal effectiveness of ongoing activities, it stands imperative to determine exactly where gaps exist in the U.S. strategy and seek to find options to shore it up and potentially achieve the desired policy. In some areas, the international community prevents the United States from gaining the broader support that might create leverage with Iran. China and Russia habitually block or water down sanctions that might truly cripple Iran's economy. In addition, a number of nations continue to skirt or ignore sanctions based on their own national interests. Further review of the situation and understanding that policy achievement will not prove easy should elucidate the difficult decisions forthcoming, or indicate a need for a review of the existing policy.

Further consideration of the Iranian nuclear program with a view toward increasing the weight of military support to the national strategy will bridge the gap between the current suggestions that diplomacy will work or, conversely, that the only way to prevent a nuclear armed

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[10]Ronald W. Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Meetings with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Iceland," Reagan Library, University of Texas, 13 October 1986, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/101386a.htm (accessed 21 March 2013).

[11]The atomic bombs ("Little Boy" and "Fat Man") the U.S. dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 remain the only occurrence of the use of nuclear weapons in the history of warfare. Between the two cities, more than 250,000 people died due to the explosion or its immediate fallout.

Iran is broad military action (e.g. strike).[12] No one has full knowledge of the variety of activities of the United States, Israel, or others take to coerce Iran. However, the activities exposed and the expectation they likely delayed Iranian progress suggest broader, more coordinated and synchronized effort might increase effectiveness of the existing strategy. Exploration of this line of thought should elucidate ideas that increase effectiveness while emphasizing the extent to which a strategy must go to achieve policy objectives. Additionally, it will create concrete examples indicative of the risk decision-makers must accept to anticipate success.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

The United States currently pursues a strategy of coercive diplomacy in response to the Iranian nuclear program using "threats and promises."[13] As such, this approach provides the best theoretical framework from which to evaluate the current situation. As a strategy, coercive diplomacy is most effective when optimum conditions exist. Alexander George, William Simons, and David Hall first explored this strategy in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*.[14] They identified eight conditions that suggest when coercive diplomacy is appropriate.[15] In the explanation and evaluation of case studies, the authors identified these conditions, along with potential spoilers, in

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[12]This discussion of military and diplomatic activities refers to the earlier point of a coordinated effort of all elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) to develop strategic art.

[13]Robert Jervis, "Getting to Yes with Iran: The Challenges of Coercive Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 1 (January/February 2013): 103.

[14]The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy has two editions (1971 & 1994). Among the editions, the ideas remain consistent yet with additional case studies and without the editing assistance from David Hall in the 1994 edition.

[15]Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, eds., *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 16-20. Additionally, the authors provide six hurdles and four critical tasks to translate the theory into a viable strategy. Focus will remain on the conditions to assist in determining viability of the strategy.

hopes of finding greater success in application.[16] These conditions will assist evaluation of the U.S. approach and determination of its potential for success within its current constraints. Furthermore, the results of this evaluation compared with ongoing activities will assist in highlighting potential gaps in the current strategic approach thusly providing the impetus for suggestions for a better application of strategic art in achieving policy objectives.

The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy provided eight conditions for assessing the efficacy of a coercive diplomacy approach. These conditions are: [1] strength of U.S. motivation, [2] asymmetry of motivation favoring the U.S., [3] clarity of objectives, [4] sense of urgency to achieve objectives, [5] sufficient domestic political support, [6] available military options, [7] opponent's fear of unacceptable escalation, and [8] clarity of settlement terms.[17] In the 1994 update to *Limits*, George and his contributors revised the list of conditions. Though not eliminating it from consideration, the military options condition no longer served as a primary condition. Instead, the text captures "strong leadership" and recognizes the interrelatedness of the geo-political landscape by adding "international support" to its list of conditions.[18] This adjusted list highlights recognition of the complexity of international relations as well as the impact of a strong leader as commander-in-chief.[19]

<u>Scope</u>

A comprehensive review of activities surrounding the Iranian nuclear program as well as its weapons specific pursuits is impossible. Lack of access to classified information as well as

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[16]David K. Hall was not party to the editing of the 1994 edition.

[17]Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, eds., *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971), 216.

[18]Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, eds., *Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 288.

[19]Ibid., 283-84.

language barriers to non-English material prevent such an endeavor. Regardless, the volume of English, open source information remains vast. Nevertheless, this aspect of the research serves to qualify findings and recommendations. Additionally, a nuclear Iran creates broader concerns. Aspects such as the regional balance of power posed by a nuclear Iran as well as the possibilities and outcome of unilateral Israeli action will only serve to lengthen and detract from this study. These constraints as well as a handful of critical assumptions serve as guiderails for subsequent discussion.

Numerous news articles highlight the ties between Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea or DPRK).[20] As such, it seems reasonable to assume they share technological and scientific information regarding the development of nuclear weapons.[21] Additionally, much debate exists over the dispersion and fortification of Iran's nuclear development sites.[22] For this reason, it stands safe to assume that Iran's nuclear weapons program will withstand any precision strike (e.g. Boeing's new massive ordnance penetrator) with only a temporary setback.[23] Furthermore, regardless of Israel's concern over the Iranian program and its

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[20]Agence France-Presse, "North Korea Nuclear Test Left Few Clues: Report," *The Australian*, 1 April 2013, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/north-korea-nuclear-test-left-few-clues-report/story-e6frg6so-1226610332710 (accessed 6 April 2013).

[21]This interaction also presumes sharing on concepts of dispersion of activities, tunneling, and circumvention of procurement methods and inspections made by the IAEA.

[22]Anthony Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan, *Analyzing the Impact of Preventive Strikes Against Iran's Nuclear Facilities* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), http://csis.org/files/publication/120906_Iran_US_Preventive_Strikes.pdf (accessed 23 July 2013).

[23]Mark Thompson, "Primed and Ready: Huge Pentagon Bunker-Buster Gets Green Light for Possible Iran Mission," *Time*, 21 January 2013, http://nation.time.com/2013/01/21/primed-and-ready-huge-pentagon-bunker-buster-gets-green-light-for-possible-iran-mission/ (accessed 6 April 2013). Thompson's sources suggest the massive ordnance penetrator can reach mission space at Iran's Fordow facility. However, there remains a lack of certainty. One year prior to this publication, Adam Entous and Julian Barnes reported in the *Wall Street Journal* the weapon would prove insufficient against the site; Adam Entous and Julian Barnes, "Pentagon Seeks Mightier Bomb vs. Iran," *Wall Street Journal*, 28 January 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203363504577187420287098692.html (accessed 6 April 2013).

previous success against Iraq and Syria, the current situation suggests they can do little more than briefly setback the program with an air strike.[24] Finally, no consensus seems to exist among the international community regarding the danger of and measures to address Iran's program. This suggests international collaboration will not coalesce and provide the critical mass necessary to achieve policy goals based on conflicting individual nation-state interests and may leave prevention of a nuclear-armed Iran to the U.S. alone.

<u>Organization of the Study</u>

To explore options to prevent Iran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability, several steps are necessary. The areas of exploration begin with a review of the recent literature on the topic and how academics and policy experts suggest the United States address the issue. Next, it stands imperative to consider the underlying reason(s) Iran seeks a nuclear weapon. This entails a review of the historical context of the Islamic Republic to include its ties to the ancient Persian Empire as well as its place in the broader Sunni-dominated Middle East and its past interactions with the West. Subsequently, it stands important to identify what a nuclear weapons capability provides Iran in terms of security and prestige. Then, a review of current U.S. activities vis-à-vis Iran must follow, which captures gaps in the existing strategy. Finally, the study concludes with recommendations for an expansion of ways and means that, when operationalized, will offer the best chance to achieve policy objectives.

Advancements over a year are certainly possible, but the overall impact on the program caused by one strike at one location is dubious given the policy goals.

[24]Kenneth N. Waltz "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 1 (July/August 2012): 4; Scott D. Sagan, "How to Keep the Bomb From Iran," in *Iran and the Bomb: Solving the Persian*, ed. Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 70.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose for reviewing U.S. policy toward the Iranian nuclear weapons program through a lens of coercive diplomacy lies in the basis of coercion itself. However, it remains important to pull the term through its theoretical constructs to its use by institutions and then into the realm of international relations. Subsequently, it follows to consider tools available to nation states in the pursuit of coercive policies. Finally, a review of the recent literature is necessary to identify what policy experts offer as methods to coerce Iran to halt its pursuits. These elements will set conditions to consider existing activities against both expert recommendations and the coercive diplomacy tenets espoused in *Limits* to identify gaps in the present strategy thereby underpinning the recommended adjustments.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy provides an overview of the philosophical basis of coercion. Scott Anderson synthesizes the work of Robert Nozick and offers a six-part outline of the logic of coercion. The first element is the concept that the coercer seeks to prevent a particular action. Next, the coercer must communicate its position. Third, the coercer must communicate the consequences that make the action less desirable. Subsequently, the coercee must perceive the claim as credible. The final two aspects to the outline are the coercee choosing not to take the action and understanding the coercer's threat was the proximate cause.[25] Given an understanding of coercion in the abstract, the next step is considering how these ideas manifest themselves in the human condition, both at the individual and collective level.

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[25]Scott Anderson, "Coercion," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/coercion/ (accessed 2 April 2013). Anderson lists the six conditions in terms of "P" – the coercer, "Q" – the coercee, and "A" – the action P seeks to prevent; Robert Nozick, "Coercion," in *Philosophy, Science, and Method: Essays in Honor of Ernest Nagel*, ed. Sidney Morgenbesser, Patrick Suppes, and Morton White (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), 440-72. Nozick deconstructs the conditions of coercion using logic to reduce the concept to simple actor interrelation.

Thomas Hobbes' 1651 work *Leviathan* remains a foundational text in demonstrating the efficacy of the state. Hobbes argues that without coercive power in the form of a "Commonwealth" [sic] man by his nature has a right to all things and nothing is unjust. Hobbes refers to this "commonwealth" as a coercive power and elaborates that it instills fear in man and hence out of fear, man acts within the constraints of a covenant he and others entered into with the commonwealth. The fear of the commonwealth's power compels man to heed the covenant resulting in coercive power.[26] Hobbes' discussion of the use of coercion between the state, or "commonwealth," and its subjects provides the foundation to consider more broadly how states use coercion in international relations in the form of coercive diplomacy.

Considering how states use coercion to gain compliance from peers demands a review of coercive diplomacy theory. Alexander George and William Simons most prolifically capture this approach in their edited work *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (1994). This volume stands as the cornerstone for any evaluation of the use of coercion in international relations.[27] As outlined previously, *Limits* offers a list of conditions and challenges to characterize the appropriateness of coercive diplomacy as a strategy. However, as noted by Peter Jakobsen, the title self-identifies the problem with coercive diplomacy as an approach. It is "limited." Jakobsen points out this unfortunate fact in a number of similar works on the topic by admitting "there is 'no recipe for success'", further highlighting the difficulty and nuance associated with successful application.[28]

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[26]Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (n.p.: 1651), https://scholarsbank.uoregon.ude/xm/ui/ bitstream/1794/748/1/leviathan.pdf (accessed 10 April 2013). Hobbes most clearly discusses the power of coercion between the state and man in Chapters 14 and 15.

[27]The 1994 version of *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* is an update to an earlier version from 1971 compiled by George and Simons with the assistance of David Hall.

[28]Peter V. Jakobsen, "Pushing the Limits of Military Coercion Theory," *International Studies Perspectives*, no. 12 (2011), 154; Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (New York: Cambridge University Press) 2002, 23.

In essence, coercive diplomacy contains only three critical elements—demand, threat, and pressure of time. Tom Sauer uses these basic requirements to address the problem at hand when considering the European Union's (EU) efforts to coerce the Iranians and their pursuit of nuclear weapons.[29] Though these elements simplify a rudimentary concept of coercive diplomacy, they fail to provide the nuance and depth required to evaluate a strategy effectively. This suggests the more detailed George/Simon model will provide the most appropriate model in considering the U.S. approach to Iran's nuclear program.

The United States is no stranger to the use of coercive diplomacy. The approach remains one that administrations occasionally use when facing a difficult situation with an uncooperative opponent. However, the approach does not always find success as pointed out in the prevailing literature on the topic. Reviewing the period between the onset of World War II and the first Gulf War, Alexander George and William Simons considered seven different instances in which the U.S. employed a strategy of coercive diplomacy. Of these occasions, they found evidence of success in only two. Particularly, they suggest the United States was successful opposing the Soviet Union, which resulted in developing terms for a cease-fire and agreeing to the neutrality of Laos.[30] George and Simons also deemed the Cuban Missile Crisis a successful application of coercive diplomacy.[31] However, each of these case study authors outlines the narrow and clearly stated U.S. policy objectives.[32] This underscores a key element of departure in the Iranian case.

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[29]Tom Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU: The Iranian Nuclear Weapons Crisis," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2007), 614.

[30]David K. Hall, "The Laos Crisis of 1961-1962: Coercive Diplomacy for Minimal Objectives," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed., ed. Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 105-108.

[31]Alexander L. George, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Peaceful Resolution Through Coercive Diplomacy," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed., ed. Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 124.

[32]Ibid.; David K. Hall, "The Laos Crisis of 1961-1962: Coercive Diplomacy for Minimal Objectives," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, ed. Alexander L. George and William E.

Conversely, George and Simons offer case studies of three instances where they suggest the strategy failed. Analysis in the cases of Libya and Nicaragua offered ambiguous findings.[33] The successes and their primary opponent—the Soviet Union—hold implications for the Iran case and raise doubts on the applicability of coercive diplomacy with a broader pool of actors. Fortunately, accounts that are more recent are available to contribute to a broader understanding.

In recent review of coercive diplomacy in action, Peter Jakobsen suggests the strategy was effective in convincing Libya to halt its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).[34] While his argument does not contradict George and Simons, Jakobsen suggests coercive diplomacy must provide more nuance than is generally understood. He offers that most analysis and debate pits "policy instruments against each other framing policy deliberations as binary choices."[35] He seeks to expand the work of Alexander George and Thomas Schelling by proposing a "3C" framework that addresses concerns in a more holistic manner.[36] Jakobsen contends that an appropriate mix of carrots, coercion, and "confidence-building" will provide the best outcomes—yet are all part of a coercive diplomacy strategy. He draws on previous work by Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman to point out the manner in which all three elements can and

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Simons, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 105. U.S. objectives vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in Laos and Cuba were narrow and precise.

[33]Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, eds., *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 269. George and Simons found failure in the cases of Pearl Harbor, Vietnam, and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. They suggest the instances of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and Libya's support of terrorists provide only ambiguous results.

[34]Peter V. Jakobsen, "Reinterpreting Libya's WMD Turnaround—Bridging the Carrot—Coercion Divide," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 35, no. 4 (2012): 504. Though George specifically discusses the use of both carrots and sticks in a number of works, Jakobsen contends the distinctions and their interrelation are not sufficiently explicit.

[35]Ibid., 490.

[36]Ibid., 494. Though not explicit, Jakobsen indicates that many readers and scholars take too narrow a focus on military threats to coerce from the numerous works of Alexander George and Thomas Schelling.

should work together to maximize effectiveness.[37] This holistic approach and its specific

applicability to WMD may expose gaps in the current U.S. approach to Iran and how best to fill

them.

Looking specifically at coercive diplomacy as a counter to Iran's nuclear program, Tom

Sauer analyzed EU efforts. His specific contribution to the debate is the analysis of why efforts

thus far (2007) were unsuccessful. He frames his argument against Scott Sagan's discussion of

why nations pursue nuclear weapons. Sagan suggests national security is only one reason and

issues such as domestic politics and prestige play a role.[38] All these elements seem likely motives

in the case of Iran and thus serve as potential focal points when seeking to limit Iranian pursuits.

Sauer offers a number of hurdles any would-be coercer must overcome to convince Iran

to abandon its pursuits. Of note, Sauer highlights Russian and Chinese efforts to water-down

international action in the United Nations (U.N.).[39] Additionally, he points out a legitimate

Iranian concern—the possibility that any acquiescence on nuclear matters will result in additional

demands in other areas.[40] A final critical element in any approach to Iran concerns the aspects of

legitimacy and interest. The United States must demonstrate its interest to deny Iran a nuclear

weapon is stronger than Iran's will to possess one[41] while also overcoming a credibility gap

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[37]Ibid., 491.

[38]Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 96/97): 55, http://fw8pk7vf4q.search.serialssolutions.com/?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rfr_id=info:sid/summon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Why+do+states+build+nuclear+weapons%3F&rf (accessed 23 April 2013).

[39]Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU: The Iranian Nuclear Weapons Crisis," 622.

[40]Ibid., 626.

[41]Ibid., 629.

demonstrated by failures to enforce the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) on other fronts.[42] These elements of concern align well with the proposed framework and add depth to subsequent analysis of gaps in U.S. strategy.

Beyond the theoretical framework of coercive diplomacy and its previous effectiveness, discussion must address specifics and consider broader recommendations in dealing with Iran's nuclear weapons pursuit. Since 2007, experts from a variety of fields have dedicated much thought to developing a viable counter to Iran's nuclear program. Many draw from one another or develop approaches that vary little in their recommendations. Thus, it seems as both the policy and how to achieve it reached stagnation. Furthermore, few of these suggestions move beyond the abstract. Instead of recommending taking action X at location Y and reinforce its effects by action A at location B, suggestions are often vague and lack the tangible activities that capture the sort of holistic approach offered by Jakobsen.

Recently, Robert Jervis provided coercive diplomacy recommendations vis-a-vis Iran. He reiterated the need for both threats and promises, capturing the crux of Jakobsen's argument.[43] Jervis also provided an overview of the challenges the U.S. faces in dealing with Iran. Particularly, he points out the history of mutual mistrust that taints the relationship and will weigh on any future negotiations.[44] In addition to pointing out difficulties, Jervis offers recommendations from a variety of viewpoints. Specifically, he argues that covert actions might slow the program.[45] From the diplomatic perspective, Jervis suggests the U.S. can gain ground by offering to normalize relations, or even unilaterally suspend sanctions to get Iran to the

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[42]Ibid., 623. Sauer highlights the West's lack of progress on Article 6 of the NPT, which promises efforts to eliminate all nuclear weapons. He also points out a lack of action to get nations such as Pakistan and Israel to give up their nuclear weapons.

[43]Jervis, "Getting to Yes," 105.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., 109. Jervis offers cyber-attacks, not unlike the Stuxnet virus, as an example.

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negotiating table.[46] A key point Jervis identifies, which permeates much of the literature, is the double-edged nature of some actions.[47] For example, increased U.S. military activity regionally reinforces the idea that a nuclear weapon is necessary for national security.[48] Jervis also points out that normalization might "conflict with the worldview of dominant actors in Iran" creating the perception of taking "a step toward eventual regime change."[49] As mentioned previously, these two issues echo Sagan's reasons nations seek nuclear weapons, thus increasing the difficulty in finding the right mix of carrots and sticks to see results.[50]

While Jervis calls for a balanced approach of both carrots and sticks (coercive diplomacy), others think a purely diplomatic solution is possible. These suggestions do not necessarily dismiss coercive measures, but they seldom consider them holistically. Instead, policy experts and officials place undue focus on how to overcome diplomatic hurdles. The most common recommendation is an acceptance that timely concessions and guarantees from the United States must be part of a solution. However, Iran does not seem ready to give in to demands for future reciprocity.[51] Likewise, Colin Kahl argues that diplomatic options exist and current sanctions are having an effect. He suggests these activities coupled with support from

[46]Ibid., 112-114.

[47]Ibid., 113.

[48]George, Hall, and Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 1971, 18-19. This aspect is a critical task identified in *Limits*. The text explains that the tools used must account for and address the unique contextual variables of the situation, meaning the U.S. must clear identify purpose.

[49]Jervis, "Getting to Yes," 112.

[50]Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons," 55; George, Simons, and Hall, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 1971, 243-45. The content and timing of carrots sticks are two of the risks highlighted in finding the proper balance of coercive tools.

[51] Reza Marashi, "Dealing with Iran," *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs* no. 7 (Fall 2012), under "Memo to the President," http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=258 (accessed 25 April 2013).

other international actors can carry the day.[52] Kahl argues against a military strike, but does not address more subtle military-like possibilities. Similarly, Scott Sagan suggests an agreed framework not unlike that negotiated with DPRK in 1994. He contests that space for a negotiated settlement does exist. Contrasting Kahl, Sagan does not take military options off the table. Instead, he advocates for limited options in the event Iran reneges on an agreement.[53]

Another perspective lies with those recommending a strike against the Iranian program. Matt Kroenig makes this argument suggesting other options are too risky and unlikely to prove fruitful. He proceeds by suggesting that under current conditions, Iran will develop a nuclear weapon, which will force the United States to move to a deterrence strategy and limit U.S. options in the Middle East. Kroenig also suggests this situation might spark a regional arms race.[54] Meanwhile, other recommendations focus on actions that might lead to regime change either through direct intervention or by supporting factions inside Iran who oppose the current regime.[55] Unfortunately, the outcome of an attempted strike or regime change might create more problems than they solve.

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[52]Colin H. Kahl, "Not Time to Attack Iran: Why War Should Be a Last Resort," in *Iran and the Bomb: Solving the Persian Puzzle*, ed. Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 119. Dr. Kahl served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East from February 2009 to December 2011.

[53]Scott D. Sagan, "How to Keep the Bomb From Iran," in *Iran and the Bomb: Solving the Persian*, ed. Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 69-85; Fareed Zakaria, "The Shape of a Nuke Deal with Iran," *New Straits (Kuala Lumpur) Times*, 14 April 2012, https://lumen.cgsccarl.com/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1000359455?accountid=28992 (accessed 21 March 2013). Zakaria does not directly reference the DPRK agreed framework, but speaks of similar mechanisms.

[54]Matthew Kroenig, "Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike is the Least Bad Option," in *Iran and the Bomb: Solving the Persian*, ed. Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 101-103.

[55]Michael Ledeen, "Tehran Takedown: How to Spark an Iranian Revolution," in *Iran and the Bomb: Solving the Persian*, ed. Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 149-156.

The United States has few available options to halt Iran's nuclear program. Available research bears this out. What remain less limited are the possibilities of using options in concert to create greater and potentially more lasting effects. Furthermore, the methods or approaches for implementing options further expand possibilities. What the situation and options lack are time and selectivity. Any successful strategy must encompass focused and complimentary activities with full implementation, which will require frequent interaction with decision makers and mutual understanding that the subsequent strategy is indivisible.

IRAN, THE WEST, AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Iran differs from nations with which the United States typically interacts in a number of ways. Its history and the manner in which it connects to that history and how this affects international relations are unique. Furthermore, the history of United States —Iran relations carries a number of distinct stressors that create hurdles to any eventual rapprochement—at least under current Iranian leadership. Additionally, Iran stands in contrast to many other Middle Eastern nations in that it accepts many aspects of Western culture. Collectively, these aspects and Iran's political and military mechanisms offer insights to the mindset of the Iranian people and provide a glimpse into why Iran pursues nuclear weapons. This understanding will assist in developing an approach that will better achieve policy objectives.

History and Context

Iran's history predates its modern identity as the Islamic Republic of Iran. Known as Persia until 1935, Iran carries with it ties to the ancient Persian Empire. [56] These ties provide linkages such as language and customs seen in the preponderance of nations. However, Iran's ties

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[56] Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: the Conflict between Iran and America* (Nebraska: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2005), 3-4; Ehsan Yarshater, "Persia or Iran, Persian or Farsi," *Iranian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1989), http://www.iran-heritage.org/ interestgroups/language-article5.htm (accessed 7 May 2013).

to its history also create a heightened nationalism seen in few other countries, let alone those in the Middle East. These aspects of Iran's self-perception make diplomatic interaction more nuanced than with nations that appear similar on their surface.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is not a typical Middle Eastern nation. First, Iran is not a predominantly Arab country. Within its borders live a number of ethnic groups, each with its own cultural nuance that distinguishes it not only from Arabs but also from one another. Of these various groups, the largest demographic is Persian.[57] The Persian majority and their history provide a locus of power for the nation. As a result, regardless the differences among them, most Iranians feel a sense of kinship to the nation's history and maintain a feeling of "Persian Pride."[58] Additionally, Iran differs from other Middle Eastern nations in its predominant religion. The preponderance (98%) of the population follows Shia Islam. Iran is not alone in this fact, but it is the only nation in the world, which holds Shiism as the state religion.[59] The Shia and Persian aspects of Iranian identity distinguish it from other nations and support a nationalistic pride seen in few other countries.[60]

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[57]Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook," https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html (accessed 12 May 2013). Persians make up 61 percent of Iran's current population.

[58]*The Economist*, "The Problem of Persian Pride," 19 March 2009, under "Leaders," http://www.economist.com/node/13326150 (accessed 9 May 2013). The article refers to Persian Pride as the reason Iran pursues a nuclear weapon. It suggests Iran's perception of its place in the region dictates pursuit of nuclear weapons based on their possession by regional competitors such as Israel and Pakistan. Furthermore, this sense of nationalism and pride ebbs and flows depending on the situation and topic—not unlike the United States

[59] Pollack, 3; "Iran—Constitution," International Constitutional Law Countries, http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html (accessed 18 April 2013). Chapter 1, Article 12 explains, "The official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja'fari school." The Twelver Ja'fari school is the largest Sh'ite Islam sub-sect; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook." The CIA Factbook provided the percentage of Shia Muslims in Iran.

[60]For detailed breakdown of Iran's demography to include ethnic groups, language and religion, among others refer to the CIA Factbook Iran page at https://www.cia.gov/library/ publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html.

Iranian Government

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran holds both a very modern, democratic aspect while also maintaining a rigid, oligarchic, and oppressive side. Writing on the "paradox" of Iran, Ray Takeyh highlights this duality stating "disagreements and tensions have persisted between those seeking to establish a divine order and those advocating a more representative polity," in his discussion of the internal struggle between the different factions that worked together during and in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution.[61] The structure of Iran's government appears quite democratic in some instances. Iran elects a president and legislature (majles) nationally and local officials at the sub-national level. However, a religious, autocratic power emanating from the office of the Supreme Leader overshadows this democratic element and serves as the true source of power in Iran.[62]

Factionalism in Iran

As with its ethnic make-up, Iranian politics lack homogeneity. The Iranian Revolution was an event that brought the masses together for a common cause through a unifying symbol in the form of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.[63] Between the revolution and his death in 1989, Khomeini successfully managed the competing factions – diffusing the tensions among them.[64]

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[61]Ray Takeyh, *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2007), 2-3.

[62]Jerrold D. Green, Frederic Wehrey, and Charles Wolf, *Understanding Iran* (Arlington, VA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 5-15, 25-28. This portion of the study discusses the formal and informal aspects of the Iranian system, roles and responsibilities of various actors, and their interactions.

[63]Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 242-43. Keddie provides an overview of the numerous factions that coalesced around Khomeini in support of his return as well as the interactions in the aftermath of the coup.

[64]Mehdi Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 2.

However, following his death unity waned and factionalism became more prevalent as elites vied for power among the various identity groups.[65] Khomeini's death required a new Supreme Leader to hold the Islamic Republic together and perpetuate the revolution. The new leader, Ali Khamenei, was not a natural choice. Instead, his selection was a negotiated settlement. He held the respect of Khomeini but lacked the religious credentials necessary for a Supreme Leader under the constitution.[66] As a result, a number of influential individuals took an active role in making the necessary changes that facilitated his selection by the Assembly of Experts.[67]

Simplistically, three primary dimensions comprise the Iranian Regime—religion, populism, and revolution.[68] These elements interact in varying degrees and strengths to create political forces and drive post-revolution policies. These forces have two distinct impacts on Iran. First, they create alliances among the elites who make and inform policy thereby reducing the ability of any singular group to capture the regime. Additionally, it provides Khamenei with immense leverage within the Iranian system. These forces provide Khamenei with supporters of two distinct forms, populist-revolutionaries and elitist-conservatives.[69] Khamenei successfully balances these two sets of stakeholders and the sub-factions created around a particular issue to maintain his power while marginalizing any perceived threats.

More recently, political tensions strain the regime's power structures. The 2005 elections seemed to be a tipping point as Khamenei supported the eventual winner, Mahmoud

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[65]Ibid., 266.

[66]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 260-61. The original constitution stressed the religious qualifications of the Supreme Leader requiring an ayatollah hold the position of faqih.

[67]Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful* Leader (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009), 6-7, 27. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was arguably the most important facilitator of Khamenei's ascendance from his position in the Assembly of Experts who vet candidates and ultimately select the Supreme Leader.

[68]Moslem, *Factional Politics*, 266.

[69]Ibid.

Ahmadinejad while turning his back on long-time friend and rival Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.[70] Ahmadinejad's margin of victory in a race where many expected Rafsanjani to prevail underscores the power wielded by Khamenei.[71]

Understanding the Supreme Leader's power within the Iranian system and the manner in which he balances the power of others holds distinct implications for U.S. interests in the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. First, it highlights the need to focus on Khamenei's interests in order to determine an approach to head-off Iran's nuclear intentions. Second, it narrows the scope in finding exactly whose interests the United States must influence. Next, it suggests that Khamenei does respond to pressure from Iran's various power factions leading toward a question of how to galvanize these factions against illicit nuclear pursuits. Finally, it highlights the importance of the Supreme Leader's position and the possibilities presented by the eventual passing of Khamenei and the naming of his successor.[72]

Of the many issues that exist in the context of the U.S.-Iran relationship, the most relevant are those that appear incompatible. The United States purports to stand for human rights and seeks to rid the world of nuclear weapons.[73] Additionally, the United States maintains a close relationship with Israel, an ally it views as a critical partner in the Middle East. Though reasonable on the surface, these interests lie in stark contrast with Iran's position and raise questions regarding the possibility of developing an amicable relationship with Iran given its current governmental form and leadership.

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[70]Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei*, 12.

[71]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 9. Ahmadinejad won 62 percent of the vote in a runoff election with Rafsanjani.

[72]Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei*, 27.

[73]Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 3, 23.

<u>Competing Worldviews</u>

The relationship between the United States and Iran is one characterized by contempt and misunderstanding. Episodes such as the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh and the hostage crisis are widely understood, but they fail to capture the full situation. A number of other instances over the years also strained the relationship. Furthermore, U.S. support for Israel and the ongoing question of a Palestinian state also play a significant role as the United States and Iran take opposing sides.

U.S. involvement with Iran began in earnest during World War II when the latter became a major distribution conduit for Lend-Lease materials.[74] Beyond use as a vehicle for the war effort, the United States sought to help Iran become a more modern nation.[75] Unfortunately, U.S. efforts had the opposite effect raising the perception that it sought to supplant British and Russians imperialist ambitions in the area.[76] Regardless, the most damaging aspect of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Iran prior to the revolution was its complicity in the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh in favor of the more malleable Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. Mossadegh felt strongly about asserting Iranian sovereignty and when Iran reached a revenue sharing impasse with the British owned, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) over Iran's oil, he worked with the majles to nationalize the industry. This action on the part of the Iranian government angered the politically connected AIOC who immediately began to pursue options to regain access to this revenue stream.[77]

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[74]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 105; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 40-41.

[75]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 48.

[76]Ibid., 40-43. Kenneth Pollack, among others, provides much more detailed accounts of the actions surrounding Mohammed Mossadegh's time as the Iranian prime minister as well as how the coup transpired.

[77]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 52-57. Mohammed Mossadegh was a popularly-elected, staunchly nationalistic prime minister who thought Iran deserved proper compensation for the oil western nations extracted.

With the loss of immense wealth in question, Great Britain sought U.S. assistance to recover Iranian oil rights. Political wrangling continued for much of 1951 and 1952, with hatred between the British and Mossadegh mounting. The British finally acquiesced to a revenue split but waited too long. Mossadegh altered his position and demanded reparations to reinstate the deal.[78] This stalemate led British Intelligence (MI6) to enlist the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to help stage a coup and install someone more amenable to British interests.[79] The coup succeeded in August 1953 and allowed Pahlavi to regain control of the Iranian government.[80] However, the mystique of Mossadegh and his nationalistic ideas resonated with Iranians, serving as a touchstone for the coming revolution.

Popular dissent became commonplace following the Shah's return, but his liberal use of SAVAK ensured he maintained power and kept enemies at bay.[81] Of these enemies was the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, an influential Shia cleric exiled in 1964 for his outspoken criticism of the regime.[82] Khomeini drew an enormous following among those disenfranchised by the Shah's policies. He publicly challenged the government for its relationship with the U.S. and perceptions of acceptance of materialism, Christianity, and Zionism—flying in the face of the Muslim faith.[83] This following only strengthened during Khomeini's exile.

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[78]Ibid., 62-63; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 128-31.

[79]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 63; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 132.

[80]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 67, 72.

[81]Ibid., 72-100. SAVAK was the shah's internal intelligence and security service. Across the discussion of the time between the overthrow of Mossadegh and the revolution, Pollack provides numerous examples of SAVAK's heavy-handed approach to providing security to the shah's regime. This includes the, sometimes violent, events that took place during the White Revolution from 1962-1964, as Pahlavi sought to impose minor reforms to appease the populace; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 134.

[82]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 168, 192; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 94.

[83]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 193.

Discontent and clashes between the people and the government of Iran continued in the 1960s and 1970s until things finally reached a percolation threshold. The Shah's lack of popular support made his situation untenable. In January 1979, he voluntarily departed Iran for the last time.[84] A few weeks later, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran and shortly took charge of the Revolution and the subsequent reconstruction of a new Iranian government.[85]

The Khomeini government was diametrically opposed to the United States and its foreign policy agenda. The original Islamic Republic constitution contends the United States and its worldview are antithetical to the basic tenets of Islam and hence those of Iran.[86] Perceptions of the United States as materialistic and imperialistic, while also serving as Israel's benefactor, were touchstones during Khomeini's reign and continue today.[87] Since the revolution, interactions between Iran and the United States typically include hostile words or in some instances, hostile actions.[88] Organizations such as the Islamic Republican Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) as well as the closely aligned Lebanese Hezbollah provide Iran a variety of options to take action or retaliate against real or perceived enemies.[89]

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[84]Ibid., 214, 238.

[85]Ibid., 238-39.

[86]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 98-100.

[87]Karim Sadjadpour, "Understanding Ayatollah Khamenei: The Leader's Thoughts On Israel, the U.S., and the Nuclear Program" in *Understanding Iran*, Jerrold D. Green, Frederic Wehrey, and Charles Wolf (Arlington, VA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 88-91. Sadjadpour's discussion of Khamenei is a workshop product that supported the larger Rand study of Green, Wherey, and Wolf. Sadjadpour's analysis of Ayatollah Khamenei closely resembles elements of Ayatollah Khomeini's outlook.

[88]These actions include those conducted by either side directly or by alleged proxies, such as Lebanese Hezbollah in the case of Iran.

[89]Matthew Levitt, *Hizballah and the Qods Force in Iran's Shadow War with the West* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2013), 1, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus123.pdf (accessed 21 July 2013); Green, Wehrey, & Wolf, *Understanding Iran*, 12. The IRGC is a military organization originally charged with protecting the revolution. It also retains control over Iran's missile capabilities. Its elite Qods Force operates external to Iran and has terrorism capabilities.

While Iranians hold a grudge over the Mossadegh coup, the hostage crisis remains a pivotal point of U.S. angst with Iran.[90] Iranian revolutionaries' storming of the Tehran embassy in November of 1979 began a renewed set of tensions between the United States and Iran. President Jimmy Carter went so far as to attempt a rescue with a newly formed military unit created for just such a purpose. However, the attempt failed when an accident occurred during a refueling operation in the Iranian desert.[91] The hostages finally gained release the day the United States swore Ronald Reagan in as President, but hostilities had just begun. The 1983 bombing of a U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Beirut—linked to Hezbollah and possibly IRGC through intelligence—killed 241 Americans.[92] Furthermore, the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia that took 19 American lives also traces to Iran.[93] These events underscore the hostile relationship between the U.S. and Iran, but avoid another episode, which drew the two nations into conflict—the Iran-Iraq War.

Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980 to readdress the issue of the international border and gain oil rich territory. Saddam Hussein sought to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the Iranian Revolution and its aftermath.[94] Iran staved off the initial onslaught, but the conflict dragged out for most of Khomeini's reign as Supreme Leader.[95] The United States avoided the

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[90]Ali M. Ansari, *Confronting Iran: The Failure of American Foreign Policy and the Next Great Crisis in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books), 93; Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 95. The 444-day hostage crisis continued from 4 November 1979 until the day of Ronald Reagan's inauguration as President on 20 January 1981.

[91]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 168-69; Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 100; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 251.

[92]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 204; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 203-04; Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 102-03; Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: Norton & Company, Inc., 2007), 143.

[93]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 139-40; Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 238.

[94]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran,* 169; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 251

[95]Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 131-32.

situation directly, until Kuwait requested assistance to protect its ships in the Arabian Gulf. The

U.S. responded by deploying the U.S. Navy to the region. Shortly thereafter, in 1987, Iraq

inadvertently fired on the USS Stark drawing the United States further into the fray.[96] Instead of

using this incident to their advantage, Iran also attacked American ships to which the United

States responded with an increased military presence.[97] The conflict came to an abrupt conclusion

in 1988.

This episode of U.S.-Iran conflict culminated with Operation Praying Mantis and the

when the U.S. shot down a civilian Iranian airplane. After repeated incidents of running into

Iranian underwater mines in the Arabian Gulf, the U.S. undertook Praying Mantis as a retaliatory

measure. The operation focused on the destruction of Iranian oil platforms in the gulf to convince

Iran to cease hostilities that damaged American ships and interrupted commerce. The final act

that gained Iranian capitulation transpired when the USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian civilian

airliner, which killed 290.[98] This forced Iran to reevaluate its ability to challenge Iraq and the

U.S. simultaneously. Bitterly, Khomeini realized the situation was unsustainable and agreed to

cease hostilities and negotiate.[99] This interlude of limited war between the United States and

Khomeini-led Iran marked a point of transition as each nation underwent leadership changes and

began a new chapter in the troubled relationship.

In the late 1980s, Khomeini grew concerned about the direction Iran might take following

his death. His chosen successor, Ayatollah Hosain Ali Montezeri, disagreed with Khomeini's

view regarding the state's control of the people, which led Khomeini to find another successor to

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[96]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 225.

[97]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 259; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 225-26

[98]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 173-74; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 259; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 232.

[99]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 232-33; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 259.

continue velayat-eh faqih.[100] These issues and concern for the future of the Islamic Republic led

Khomeini to select Ali Khamenei as his successor and begin necessary steps to adjust the

constitution to accommodate Khamenei's ascendance.[101] As a result, when Khomeini died in June

1989, Khamenei stepped in. This followed closely on the heels of President Reagan's completion

of his second term and the inauguration of George H. W. Bush.

Khamenei's religious credentials did not closely resemble those of his predecessor.[102] As

such, his power lay in his close relationships with the Pasdaran (IRGC) and the Iranian president

Rafsanjani, while influential clerics continued to express verbal doubts.[103] During Rafsanjani's

time as president (1989-1997), a number of changes took place in Iran. Both the Supreme Leader

(Khamenei) and Rafsanjani recognized the toll taken on the nation by the revolution and the war

with Iraq. Accordingly, with the Pasdaran managing internal dissent, the pair sought to revitalize

the nation's economy through greater privatization and a more diplomatic approach to

international relations.[104]

After a brief period of perceived goodwill under the presidency of George H. W. Bush,

President Bill Clinton came to office and altered the U.S. approach to Iran. U.S. policy became

one of Dual Containment toward both Iran and Iraq instead of seeking to balance one against the

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[100]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 240; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 144. Velayat-e faqih is "rule of the jurisprudent." This concept suggested that a learned scholar of Islam would lead the nation as a "theocratic philosopher-king" The conception demanded that the leader of the Islamic Republic be of a particularly high standing in the eyes of Islam, an ayatollah.

[101]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 260-61.

[102]Sadjadpour, *Reading Khameini*, 4.

[103]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 262-64. At the time of Khomeini's death, Rafsanjani was the Speaker of the Majles. Elected president shortly after Khomeini died, Rafsanjani assumed the position the following month, in August 1989.

[104]Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 264-65.

other.[105] Likewise, Iran saw U.S. policy and rhetoric as a threat and increased its support to militant groups such as Hizbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hamas.[106] Support to non-state actors and other Iranian dealings continued to undermine U.S. regional interests while also directly confronting the United States in the form of terror attacks such as that on the aforementioned Khobar Towers.[107] These sorts of exchanges began to characterize the relationship between the United States and Iran.

Following the 11 September 2001 attacks, a brief opportunity for rapprochement appeared in the U.S.-Iran relationship. The United States sought to find and punish the culprits. Iran gave indications it might help in that endeavor. However, following a speech by new president George W. Bush in which he referred to Iran as a member of the "axis of evil," goodwill quickly dissipated.[108] In Iran, President Mohammed Khatami hoped to reform Iran in a manner that might reestablish diplomatic relations with the United States but other regime elites thwarted his efforts and began to counter the United States in the Middle East yet again. This was evident following the 2003 American invasion of Iraq. Iran quickly moved to develop its own interests inside Iraq and ensure the next government would not provide it with the same difficulties presented by Sadam Hussein.[109] Following the invasion, Iran initially responded with a degree of concern as it perceived the United States might also view Iran as a target for regime change given the strained relationship and U.S. military's territorial control of two of its

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[105]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 266; Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 267. At this time, the U.S. thought both were pursuing illicit nuclear advancement.

[106]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 266-67.

[107]Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 114-15. Discussion of Iran support to Lebanese Hizballah demonstrates opposition to the Middle East Peace Process based on Hizballah's espoused goals.

[108]Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 185-188; Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 352-53.

[109]Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 217-218.

neighbors.[110] This caused a brief respite in its intransigence as well as its nuclear program while waiting to determine U.S. intentions. When it became apparent Iran was not a target, the Islamic Republic began its activism in Iraq to shape the future of the Shia-dominated nation while also looking to target U.S. personnel and interests through support to surrogates and proxies. Repeated Iranian recalcitrance took such a toll on the United States that it prompted then theater commander, General David Petraeus, to seek a meeting with IRGC-QF commander, Qassem Soleimani.[111] The shift in Iran's approach also became visible in its choice of political leaders.

In 2005, Iran elected Mahmoud Ahmadinejad president in a surprise choice.[112] The former Tehran mayor's conservatism and dedication to the Islamic Republic served to bolster the Supreme Leader while his populist policies developed appeal among the majority.[113] Ahmadinejad was also an outspoken leader and extremely critical of the United States.[114] Likewise, he criticized other Iranian elites.[115] While this caused friction between the President

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[110]Ibid., 202-04.

[111]Jay Solomon and Siobhan Gorman, "Iran's Spymaster Counters U.S. Moves in the Mideast," *Wall Street Journal*, 6 April, 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/ SB10001424052702303381650457730574288 4577460.html (accessed 21 May 2013). Allegedly, General Petraeus received communication from Soleimani claiming responsibility for Iranian foreign policy in a large portion of the Middle East. Based on this communication and the perception that Iran was responsible for supporting insurgent groups who targeted American soldiers in Iraq, Petraeus sought a meeting with Soleimani. Soleimani is extremely close to Ayatollah Khamenei and allegedly controls Iran's foreign policy in Iraq and the Levant.

[112]Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 225-227.

[113]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 54. Takeyh points out that Ahmadinejad's discourse on the promise of reforms and increased democracy eventually won over the populace. It is also important to note that the Guardian Council approve any candidates for President, which allows a degree of control over the process and ensures no waves of popular sentiment can carry someone opposing the velayat-e-faqih into office.

[114]Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "Transcript of Ahmadinejad's U.N. Speech" (speech, United Nations General Assembly, New York, NY, 19 September 2006), http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6107339 (accessed 23 July 2013).

[115]He criticized Khatami for his reformist approach and Rafsanjani for his corruption and largesse. In turn, they criticize Ahmadinejad for his populist agenda and suppression of rights.

and other formal structures of the government, it provided Ayatollah Khamenei additional

leverage by creating cleavages by which he could better control the direction of the republic.

These structures of formal power, or at least their constituent positions, also extend into the

informal structures allowing broader control among Iranian elites.[116] Collectively, this internal

discourse allows Khamenei to strengthen his control on Iran's government and foreign policy.

Ahmadinejad's presence provided a foil, which allowed the Supreme Leader to maintain

comfortable control.

When President Barack Obama took office, he sought to change the U.S. narrative of

involvement in the Middle East and particularly with nations who stood at historical odds with

the U.S., such as Iran. He offered an outstretched hand to meet an unclenched fist.[117] This

approach met mixed responses. The rapprochement drew the ire of a number of foreign policy

hardliners in the United States while causing excessive consternation from Israel.[118] Regardless, it

presented an opportunity to change the relationship between Iran and the United States.

Rapprochement was short lived. IAEA reports suggested dubious intentions regarding

Iran's nuclear programs.[119] This revelation coupled with the heavy-handed response to reformist

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[116]Amin Saikal, "The Politics of Factionalism in Iran" in *Understanding Iran*, Jerrold D. Green, Frederic Wehrey, and Charles Wolf (Arlington, VA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 98-101. Saikal lays out the framework established by Ayatollah Khomeini regarding the balance between the conservative (Jihadi) and reformist (Ijtihadi) extremes that keep the republic grounded in Shiite Islam. Khameini's ability to shift formal power between the two while also preventing dissolution of the other when they are out of power (informal) demonstrates his adeptness at balancing the political landscape and prevent challenges to his supreme rule.

[117]Barack Obama, "Inaugural Address" (speech, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC, 20 January 2009), http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address (accessed 21 July 2013). President Obama did not specifically mention Iran in this instance, but he did refer to authoritarianism in the Middle East.

[118]Jeffrey Goldberg "Netanyahu to Obama: Stop Iran—or I Will," *The Atlantic*, 31 March 2009, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/03/netanyahu-to-obama-stop-iran-or-i-will/307390/ (accessed 21 July 2013).

[119]Board of Governors, *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1835*

protests following the 2009 Iranian presidential elections and other pressures forced President

Obama to adjust course on Iran.[120] Aspirations for dialogue waned and President Obama sought

to increase pressure on Iran diplomatically and economically through further unilateral and multi-

lateral sanctions while calling for broader action among the international community.[121] Though

offers at a dialogue remained on the table, the heightened costs imposed on Iran hardened their

position.

<u>Iran and the Need for Nuclear Weapons</u>

The complexity of the relationship between the United States and Iran defies simplistic

analysis. However, the key ideas captured in this review require constant consideration when

seeking to understand Iran. First, Iran maintains an immense sense of pride both as Shia Muslims

and as descendants of the Persian Empire. This feeds their desire for self-sufficiency in matters

such as the nuclear fuel cycle. Additionally, they hold a disdain and suspicion of non-Middle

Eastern nations (particularly the West) due to repeated interference in their affairs. Particularly,

American ascendance since World War II, its role in deposing Mossadegh, and support to the

Shah made the United States an outlet for Iran's hard feelings toward the West. Continued U.S.

support to Israel only magnifies this discontent. However, one further aspect does prove

important in developing a successful strategy in countering Iran's nuclear pursuits. The Islamic

(2008) in the Islamic Republic of Iran (New York: International Atomic Energy Association, 5 June 2009), http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2009/gov2009-35.pdf (accessed 26 July 2013).

[120]Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Berlusconi of Italy in Press Availability," White House-Oval Office, Washington, DC, 15 June 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-berlusconi-press-availability-6-15-09 (accessed 26 July 2013).

[121]United States Mission to the United Nations, "Ambassador Susan Rice," http://usun.state.gov/leadership/c31461.htm (accessed 26 July 2013).

Republic respects hard power. Their muted responses to instances such as the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 provide evidence to this effect. .[122]

The Iranian regime has a singular central goal—perpetuation of the regime.[123] To sustain this constant goal, the Islamic Republic may think it requires a nuclear weapon or at least prove advantageous in pursuit of its goal.[124] Since the revolution, the regime has faced a number of security, economic, and political challenges that heighten concerns over its ability to sustain progress toward regime perpetuation.[125] A nuclear weapon can address the regime's challenges either directly or indirectly. First, a weapon will serve as a deterrent to other nations who may seek to act aggressively toward Iran, such as Israel or the United States. This will allow Iran to pursue policy objectives externally with reduced concern for domestic reprisals. Furthermore, Iran would have the first Shia bomb. Though not necessarily significant to some, it will certainly heighten Iranian prestige in the Middle East and the broader Muslim world.[126] Finally, a nuclear weapon will provide Iran with additional technological expertise that is in keeping with its

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[122]Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 202-204.

[123]Alireza Nader, "Think Again," *Foreign Policy*, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/28/think_again_a_nuclear_iran?page=full (accessed 1 June 2013). Nader discusses the pragmatic approach of the regime as well as Ayatollah Khamenei's interest in maintain the regime above all else regardless the perceptions of onlooker.

[124]Kenneth N. Waltz "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 1 (July/August 2012): 2. Iran publicly states that they do not want a nuclear weapon as to admit such would bring only additional external pressures; Shahram Chubin, "Decisionmaking for National Security: The Nuclear Case," in *Understanding Iran*, Jerrold D. Green, Frederic Wehrey, and Charles Wolf, (Arlington, VA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 60. Chubin suggests the IRGC's position within the structure of the nuclear debate and its charge of maintaining national security steer Iran toward a nuclear weapon.

[125]This highlights the context in which Iran pursues a nuclear weapon. Additionally, it correlates to Sagan's list of reasons any nation might see as reason to pursue such a program.

[126]Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 223.

constitutional goals while potentially expanding its economic opportunities for trade with other nations.[127]

The most important aspect of Iran's reasoning behind its pursuit of nuclear weapon is the insight it provides in considering options to coerce a halt to its pursuits. If the goal is perpetuating the regime with a nuclear weapon serving as a means to that end, it stands to reason that any coercion must seek to de-link these elements of the Iranian strategy or present challenges such that it must choose between taking the last steps to become a nuclear weapons state or jeopardize regime survival.

THE EFFICACY OF COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

The United States uses a strategy of coercive diplomacy in response to perceptions that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon.[128] However, questions remain whether the strategy in its current form is adequate, and if not, what additional options are available. To determine the efficacy of the current strategy, it is necessary to evaluate the favorability of success through consideration of the eight conditions established earlier. If found wanting, steps must follow to shift favorability to the American side, or consider alternatives.

The motivational aspects of coercive diplomacy are two-sided. In the case of Iran, the U.S. must conclude a nuclear-armed Iran poses a sufficient threat to warrant action. Given the nature of the relationship and existing activities in the realm of sanctions, diplomatic outreach and the ties to Stuxnet, it seems apparent the United States finds sufficient reason to take action to

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[127]"Iran—Constitution," International Constitutional Law Countries, http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html (accessed 18 April 2013). Chapter 1, Article 3, Item 13 highlights the concept of self-sufficiency in scientific and technological spheres.

[128]Jervis, "Getting to Yes," 103.

prevent Iran from possessing a nuclear weapon.[129] The next aspect to consider is the precise

strength of U.S. motivation in this regard. The United States must consider Iran's past actions

such as those that took American lives, its support of terrorist groups, and Iran's interests in

seeing the dissolution of Israel.[130] Ties to terrorism reinforce U.S. concern over how Iran might

safeguard or proliferate nuclear technology and weapons if they become nuclear-armed.[131]

Hypersensitivity to terrorism following the 11 September attacks resonate among the American

people, which makes Iranian nuclear pursuits a recurring political issue, which can tempt political

leaders to take outspoken positions on the situation. This may also heighten motivations to take

action. Israel's ability to influence the United States in this regard is another factor. Iranian policy

on Israel and Israeli rhetoric over the dangers posed by Iran's nuclear program serve to

heighten—while muddying—U.S. concerns.[132]

In addition to American concerns, Iran also gets a vote. Iran has legitimate security

concerns that make possession of a nuclear deterrent an attractive pursuit. This includes how

possession will likely change its diplomatic position in the international community, and

particularly with regard to its relationship with the United States. As recently as 2011, the U.S.

[129]David E. Sanger, *Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power* (New York: Crown, 2012), xi. Stuxnet is name given to the computer virus that attacked the Iranian nuclear program. Many suggest the virus originated in the U.S.

[130]Rick Gladstone, "Iran's President Calls Israel 'an Insult to Humankind'," *New York Times*, 17 August 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/18/world/middleeast/in-iran-ahmadinejad-calls-israel-insult-to-humankind.html (accessed 23 July 2013); Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 139-40; Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 238.

[131]James M. Lindsay and Ray Takeyh. "After Iran Gets the Bomb," In *Iran and the Bomb: Solving the Persian Puzzle*, edited by Gideon Rose and Jonathan Tepperman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2012), 131.

[132]John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 282. The concern is a distinction between American and Israeli national interests. Additionally, it remains incumbent upon policy makers to ensure Israel does not unduly influence U.S. foreign policy regarding the Iranian nuclear program. Mearsheimer and Walt contend the Israel Lobby pushes the U.S. toward a "strategically unwise policy toward Iran."

assisted an international movement to remove Muammar Gaddafi from power in Libya.[133] This

occurred just shortly after Gaddafi gave up his own nuclear pursuits and reestablished relations

with the United States. Conversely, North Korea attempted three nuclear tests with results

suggesting they possess a fissionable devise.[134] These examples are instructive. Each nation

willingly takes brutal action toward its own citizens when deemed necessary to maintain

control.[135] Additionally, each pursued nuclear weapons at one point.[136] The former gave up its

pursuit and underwent regime change with assistance from external actors. The latter continues its

human rights abuses toward its own people and creates situations through provocative action,

which earn concessions from the international community. These analogies are crude, but they

highlight how onlookers might interpret U.S. action or inaction.[137] Likewise, Iran can consider

Pakistan as an analog. Pakistan is a quasi-safe haven for Taliban and al-Qaeda. Some would

argue that Pakistan provides support to these organizations.[138] However, the United States avoids

egregious violation of Pakistani sovereignty only occasionally conducting cross-border operations

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[133]Romesh Ratnesar, "Why Overthrowing Gaddafi Is Overrated," *Time*, 5 April 2011, http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2063190,00.html (accessed 21 July 2013).

[134]"In Focus: North Korea's Nuclear Threats," *New York Times*, 16 April 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/04/12/world/asia/north-korea-questions.html?_r=0 (accessed 21 July 2013).

[135]"Human Rights in North Korea," *Human Rights Watch*, 31 July 2013, http://www.hrw.org/nkorea (accessed 31 July 2013); "Libya," *Human Rights Watch*, 31 July 2013, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/Libya (accessed 31 July 2013).

[136]Jakobsen, "Reinterpreting," 505.

[137]Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: the Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: Free Press, 1988). Throughout their book, Neustadt and May highlight the dangers of accepting analogies without reviewing the relevant context that makes them distinct. This exercise in comparisons is critical in finding the proper approach to each situation.

[138]Azmat Khan, "Leaked NATO Report Alleges Pakistani Support for Taliban," PBS *Frontline*, 1 February 2012, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/afghanistan-pakistan/secret-war/leaked-nato-report-alleges-pakistani-support-for-taliban/ (accessed 26 July 2013).

directed at terrorists. Additionally, the United States provides billions of dollars to Pakistan in foreign aid. If Pakistan were not a nuclear-armed nation, would America respond in the same manner? Iran must also consider this analog.[139]

It seems Iran likely holds the balance of any asymmetry in motivation vis-à-vis the United States regarding its nuclear pursuits. For Iran, eliminating or greatly reducing potential for the United States or any other nation to attempt regime change is excellent motivation for continuing its pursuit. This creates problems for the application of existing U.S. strategy. It suggests America must reframe its perspective regarding the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran such that it makes this possibility a greater national security threat than currently perceived. This escalation of political will based on the 'new' threat might broaden the acceptable options available to counter pursuits bringing U.S. motivations more on par with those of Iran.

Clarity of U.S. objectives toward Iran's nuclear program is critical. Though not critical in every instance, it seems paramount in the case of Iran.[140] Currently, the United States seeks a number of changes in Iranian behavior. Beyond the question of nuclear weapons, America deems Iran a state sponsor of terrorism.[141] Additionally, Iran has a history of human rights abuses.[142]

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[139]William R. Polk, *Understanding Iran* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian), 2009, 198-199.

[140]Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press), 1991, 76.

[141]U.S. Department of State, "State Sponsors of Terrorism," 14 July 2013, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm (accessed 14 July 2013); Michael R. Gordon and Steven Lee Myers, "Iran and Hezbollah Support for Syria Complicates Peace-Talk Strategy," *New York Times*, 21 May 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/22/world/middleeast/iran-and-hezbollahs-support-for-syria-complicates-us-strategy-on-peace-talks.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed 14 July 2013). Iran remains a known supporter of Hezbollah, a group with a history of terrorist and overt attacks against Israel. Hezbollah and Iran both now aid the Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria.

[142]Sophie Quinton, "Obama Issues New Sanctions on Human-Rights Abuses in Iran and Syria," *National Journal*, 23 April 2012, http://www.nationaljournal.com/bestyear/obama-issues-new-sanctions-on-human-rights-abuses-in-iran-and-syria-20120423 (accessed 14 July 2013).

Specific to the nuclear program, another layer of opacity exists. The United States maintains that Iran has a right to a peaceful nuclear energy program, but not weapons. However, there is no confirmation that Iran operates outside the structure of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Additionally, as Iran moves forward with its program, both the United States and UN push Iran toward a policy more restrictive than that demanded under the NPT.[143] This might be a conscious effort to provide flexibility, but it also highlights the difficulty in distinguishing which portions of a nuclear program are for peaceful energy and which are weapons specific. [144] Centrifugal uranium enrichment, for example, is a technique for reactor fuel production and also for developing technical expertise as the highly enriched uranium used in a nuclear weapon undergoes the same process—just to a greater degree of concentration.[145]

To gain movement on the stalemate, the United States must create a sense of urgency such that Iran takes the desired action. Thus far, Iran perceives no such sense of urgency. Though administrations transitioned, U.S. policy regarding a nuclear-armed Iran changed little. Some might argue current constraints to the strategy originated in to the Clinton administration. Regardless, both George W. Bush and Barack Obama both clearly stated that military action is a

[143]Paul K. Kerr, "Iran's Nuclear Program: Tehran's Compliance with International Obligations," Congressional Research Service, 31 July 2013, 7, 10, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R40094.pdf (accessed 27 August 2013).

[144]The concentration of highly enriched uranium varies, depending on the application. Presently, Iran has known quantities at 19.75 percent purity. This level has a peaceful application such as in the medical field, but little-to-no use for applications other than as a waypoint to enrich to the levels necessary for weapons. This lack of certainty denies the ability to make an absolute determination on the "peaceful" nature of the program creating space for equivocation.

[145]Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, "Nuclear Weapons," http://www.wisconsinproject.org/bomb-facts/nuclearessay.htm (accessed 14 July 2013); United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, "Fact Sheet On Uranium Enrichment," 29 March 2012, http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/enrichment.html (accessed 14 July 2013).

viable option.[146] Extrapolating, the United States allowed Iran to continue its nuclear weapons program for 13 years, gain vast experience, and move ever closer to possession of a nuclear weapon without taking decisive action. This suggests a lack of urgency. This lack of urgency and failure to offer greater specificity of demands may stem from a fear of the potential need to sell another conflict to the American people and international partners.

Few Americans would disagree that Iranian possession of nuclear weapons is undesirable, but there seems a general lack of will to act broadly to deny such an outcome. Following 12 years of continual military engagement, the United States appears tired and unready for broad-scale armed conflict with Iran. However, if U.S. policy remains unchanged and Iran continues its current trajectory, a conflict may prove inevitable. The threat of a nuclear Iran remains a consistent topic of debate as American political parties seek to demonstrate their concern and sincerity over national security, but interest in other emerging domestic and other international developments occasionally overshadow this long-term issue.[147] Current domestic political support falls short of that necessary to create the perception of a credible military threat in the eyes of Iranian leadership. However, if acted upon soon opportunities do exist to shape the situation in a manner that generates additional domestic support for stronger action short of war.

International support for denying Iran nuclear weapons remains a mixed bag. The EU generally agrees with the U.S. position on the issue and undertook numerous measures the past

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[146]Roger Cohen, "The Unthinkable Option," *New York Times*, 4 February 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/05/opinion/05cohen.html (accessed 14 July 2013). Regardless of the verbal warnings, little indication exists that the U.S. might actually use military action in the typical sense. There are nuanced differences in the approach between Presidents Bush and Obama, but little that might seem different from the Iranian perspective other that rhetoric.

[147]Domestic issues such as Edward Snowden's disclosure of national security secrets, civil unrest in Egypt, the security of Americans across the Middle East in the wake of new Al-Qaeda threats, and what is becoming civil war in Syria all draw interest away from concerns over the Iranian nuclear program.

decade to punish Iran for its actions.[148] However, there are still international actors who do not support efforts to counter Iran. Many non-aligned nations maintain the position that Iran's actions remain within its sovereign rights.[149] Additionally, powerful nations such as China and Russia prevent or dilute sanctions that might create greater leverage.[150] International support exists, but questions remain whether it is strong enough and thorough enough to get ahead of Iranian progress. This gap also highlights the need to identify other available options.

There are a number of measures available to the U.S. and the broader international community. Options such as the use of precision guided munitions against known or suspected nuclear weapons related sites are a possibility. Broader embargos against Iranian exports and informational and financial transactions are also options with the proper support.[151] Regardless, these options will require support, both domestically and internationally, that proves difficult to generate. Given perceptions of declining U.S. influence, there may be few options available to senior Obama administration leaders to generate such support at an acceptable cost.[152]

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[148]Teri Schultz, "Are Sanctions On Iran Working?" *New Europe (Brussels)*, 21 April 2013, http://www.neurope.eu/article/are-sanctions-iran-working (accessed 1 June 2013); Tom Sauer, "Coercive Diplomacy by the EU: The Iranian Nuclear Weapons Crisis," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2007).

[149]Schultz, "Are Sanctions On Iran Working?" During his tenure, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spent considerable time fostering relationships with members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to create a bit of a counterbalance to efforts by the U.S. and EU.

[150]Jay Solomon, "China, Russia Resist Sanctions Against Iran," *Wall Street Journal*, 17 November 2011, http://online.wsj.com/article/ SB10001424052970204517204577042490257658040.html (accessed 1 June 2013).

[151]Current embargos imposed by the U.S. are steep, but there are still a few options available. Additionally, the larger international community has even greater space to heighten the costs on Iran.

[152]Steven Myers and Michael Gordon, "Kerry Blasts Russia on Arms Sales to Syria," *New York Times*, 1 June 2013. http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2013/06/01/kerry-blasts-russia-arms-sales-syria/6zFDqIFfPRjZYb0zwSaRjP/story.html (accessed 1 June 2013). Russian does have stronger ties to Syria than to Iran, but the willingness to defy U.S. interests suggests the difficulty in generating support on Iran.

In order to convince Iran that its bests interests lie in abandonment of its nuclear weapons program, the United States must create conditions such that Iran fears the next steps of escalation sufficiently that costs imposed by the escalation outweigh possession of a weapon.[153] Considering the existing diplomatic and economic strain Iran already feels, this will prove difficult.[154] Little remains for America to extract without expansion of the acceptable means. If Iran sees or views a nuclear weapon as crucial to regime perpetuation, there may prove little short of a realistic threat of regime change to gain acquiescence. This understanding must provide the foundation for determining the additional steps the United States must take to retain hope of success with its strategy of coercive diplomacy.

The final aspect to address in considering the efficacy of coercive diplomacy is that of clarity in settlement terms. This aspect could prove the most difficult condition to create. Currently, the U.S. sanctions Iran for its support to terrorists, human rights abuses, and its nuclear pursuits.[155] The United States must determine what concessions it is willing to offer Iran in exchange for halting its nuclear program as well as establishing the mechanisms to quickly eliminate or reduce sanctions as soon as Iran complies. Certainly, Iran will not give up its nuclear program, halt its support to the likes of Hezbollah, and allow its citizenry the same freedoms Americans enjoy. This would prove tantamount to regime change and likely result in exactly that were it to undertake all those measures. The United States lacks clarity and specificity in its policy objectives. Publicly, the United States has yet to provide the distinct trade-offs it will offer

[153]George and Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy,* 1994, 285. This addresses the George and Simons "unacceptability of threatened escalation" condition of their methodology.

[154]Byman and Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion*, 4. Here Byman and Waxman explain that "as an adversary absorbs more and more destruction, the proportion of its decisions that are motivated by the threat of future destruction declines."

[155]United States Department of State, "Iran Sanctions Contained in the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act (ITRSHRA)," Fact Sheet, http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/fs/2012/198393.htm (accessed 1 June 2013).

in return for a verified halt to Iran's nuclear program. This ambiguity coupled with a lack of open diplomatic channels can only serve to impede progress and prolong the matter while increasing the possibility of uncontrolled escalation.

Based on the proposed criteria, America lacks the situational advantage to anticipate success with its current strategy of coercive diplomacy. The conditions reviewed are neither mandatory nor prioritized, they simply point to a context in which the potential for coercive diplomacy to succeed is favorable.[156] However, the findings do raise questions regarding the United States' ability to induce a halt to Iranian nuclear pursuits. Evaluation finds the U.S. deficient in the majority of the conditions. This suggests a necessity to reconsider the existing ways and means if the United States hopes to succeed.[157]

Filling the Gaps

The elements of national power provide the basis to consider actions the U.S. government currently takes to pursue its policy.[158] This review, using an ends-ways-means approach, will highlight gaps and options for expansion of efforts to achieve policy goals. This will also provide the basis for actions the military might take to add to or enhance current activities. Furthermore, ways and means are difficult to separate. Often a particular "mean" stands as the sole manner in which a "way" is pursuable or vice versa. This suggests an appropriate review of the elements of national power will address them collectively.

In simplest terms, the ends of a strategy to deny Iran nuclear weapons is to convince the Islamic Republic it does not need them—to change their will. If Iran pursues nuclear weapons for

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[156]George, *Forceful Persuasion*, 75-76.

[157]Arthur F. Lykke, "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy," in *Military Strategy: Theory and Application*, edited by Arthur F. Lykke, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1989), 3-4. Lyyke lays out the ends, ways, and means construct of strategy.

[158]Chilcoat, "Strategic Art," 3. Figure 1 offers a visual depiction of the instruments of national power, the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic aspects of strategy.

its ultimate goal of regime survival, it seems apparent that the best, if not the only, approach to achieve this "end" is creating conditions such that the regime cannot coexist with possession of a nuclear weapon. In short, Iranian leadership must conclude that the possession of a nuclear weapon is antithetical to its primary goal of regime perpetuation.[159] Establishment of this concept as an end provides the basis for a true evaluation of the ways and means.

Diplomatically, the United States takes extensive measures to work with international partners in order to gain leverage over the Iranian Regime. It engages bodies such as the U.N. General Assembly where it previously threatened to expose the Iranian nuclear facility near the city of Qom.[160] The U.S. also worked within the Security Council to pass resolutions addressing Iran's non-compliance with international norms. Additionally, it uses other international forums, such as the Group of 20 (G20)[161] to create and demonstrate international resolve codified in joint statements denouncing Iran's nuclear pursuits.[162] However, there are areas where the U.S. could improve its diplomatic efforts to counter Iran. For example, China continues to trade with Iran and complies with existing U.N. sanctions only to their letter. It does not apply the stronger measures imposed by the United States and other nations, such as those of the EU.[163] Recently,

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[159]Cost-benefit analysis lies at the heart of coercion. This line of thought is foundational in the works of Thomas Schelling, Robert Pape as well as that of Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman.

[160]Bobby Ghosh, "CIA Knew About Iran's Secret Nuclear Plant Long Before Disclosure," *Time*, 7 October 2009, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1929088,00.html (accessed 2 June 2013).

[161]Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "The G20," 2 June 2013, http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/g20/ (accessed 2 June 2013). The Group of 20, or G20, is an international forum of nations that seeks economic cooperation.

[162]Karen DeYoung and Michael Shear, "U.S., Allies Say Iran Has Secret Nuclear Facility," *Washington Post*, 26 September 2009, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-09-26/world/36784470_1_secret-nuclear-facility-qom-facility-enrichment (accessed 2 June 2013).

[163]Erica Downs and Suzanne Maloney, "Getting China to Sanction Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2011, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67465/erica-downs-and-suzanne-maloney/getting-china-to-sanction-iran?page=show (accessed 2 June 2013).

the U.S. engaged the IAEA about concerns over potential nuclear related activities on a military base at Parchin.[164] Such diplomatic measures also highlight the interconnectedness of the elements of national power, particularly that of information.

The information aspect of national power takes a variety of forms. The Parchin exposure highlights the interconnectedness of intelligence, information, and diplomacy. The IAEA used satellite photos provided by the United States as evidence to support its demands to inspect the site. The incident forced Iran to respond publicly while also attempting to sanitize the site in the event they eventually have to allow IAEA inspections.[165] However, there is little indication the incident had any impact on working toward the desired ends as Iran continues to argue that its nuclear program is only for peaceful energy purposes. Recently, the United States took an interesting step in the information environment in which Iran must deal. The United States lifted sanctions that barred sales of electronic devices and computer software in Iran. This suggests the United States sought to increase internal pressure on the regime by empowering the Iranian citizenry informationally in anticipation of the June 2013 presidential elections.[166] This measure may seek to capitalize on the "Green Movement" phenomenon that developed around the 2009 elections.[167] This will likely increase pressure on the regime to maintain internal control. However, the Guardian Council's pre-election vetting of all candidates offers Iran a method to

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[164]"Tehran Ready to Allow Experts to Parchin in Exchange for Deal with IAEA—Iran's Ambassador to Russia," *Russia Today*, 19 May 2013, http://rt.com/news/iran-parchin-deal-iaea-486/ (accessed 14 July 2013).

[165]France 24, "IAEA Says May Find Nothing at Iran Base Parchin," 29 May 2013, http://www.france24.com/en/20130529-iaea-says-may-find-nothing-iran-base-parchin (accessed 1 August 2013).

[166]Terry Atlas, "U.S. Lifts Iran Sanctions On Laptops, Mobile Phones," *Bloomberg*, 30 May 2013, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-29/u-s-to-ease-iran-sanctions-on-laptops-mobile-phones.html (accessed 2 June 2013).

[167]Reuters, "U.S. to Loosen Sanctions On Iran for Mobile Phones, Gadgets," 30 May 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/30/us-usa-iran-sanctions-phone-idUSBRE94T0WF20130530 (accessed 2 June 2013).

ease the pressure. Supporting this measure is the nation's constitution, which mandates the council's supervision of elections.[168] As such, the United States continues its informational war with Iran to influence the forces that allow the regime to retain control. Iran's system of government also reinforces its ability to maintain control, which only adds to the difficulty America will face in using the informational element of national power to its full effect.

The economic instrument of national power is one the United States exercises the most in response to Iranian nuclear pursuits in attempting to coerce the Islamic Republic into halting its program. The list of sanctions and other control measures the United States employs is lengthy. It takes action against all variety of Iranian entities from bonjads,[169] to its central bank,[170] and even individuals.[171] These sanctions and those that focus on the petroleum-based aspects of Iran's economy create significant dilemmas for Iran but also for other nations or businesses that look to engage in commerce with Iran. These third parties run the risk of cutting themselves off from the U.S. banking sector if caught engaging in business dealings that violate sanctions against Iran.[172] Furthermore, U.S. sanctions against Iran do have exceptions, which can undermine their

[168]"Iran—Constitution." Chapter 6, Article 99 highlights the Guardian Councils responsibility to supervise elections.

[169]Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 38. Bonyads are religion-based charitable foundations often used by Iran to circumvent sanctions or as tools for graft on the part of the ruling elite.

[170]Carol Lee and Keith Johnson, "U.S. Targets Iran's Central Bank," *Wall Street Journal*, 4 January 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/ SB10001424052970204720204577132923798499772.html (accessed 2 June 2013).

[171]U.S. Department of State, "Sanctioned Entities List," http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/index.htm (accessed 14 July 2013); The U.S. Department of State maintains detailed lists of sanctioned entities.

[172]Timothy Gardner, "U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Iran's Petrochemical Industry," *Reuters*, 31 May 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/31/us-usa-sanctions-iran-idUSBRE94U13A20130531 (accessed 2 June 2013). This aspect certainly serves as a deterrent to enterprises actively seeking to engage in business with Iran. However, it could also have unintended consequences for enterprises who unwittingly violate sanctions.

effectiveness.[173] These externalities highlight the difficulties of sanctions.[174] Among other things, sanctions cut both ways.[175] If the United States eliminates all exemptions, friendly nations might feel the impact and lead to tensions in other international relationships. Instead, the United States allows exemptions, which provides Iran with an outlet for its goods thereby undermining the effects of the sanctions. There are also non-aligned nations who trade with Iran as well as black markets and other mechanisms that allow Iran to ease the pressure of sanctions. Finally, the United States must consider sanctions at the microeconomic level. The Iranian regime has firm control of its internal security situation such that it can force its citizens to accept the effects of sanctions with little threat to the regime. These additional aspects reinforce the difficulty in finding a sanctions regimen that creates the desired effects in absence of strong support from the other elements of national power.

In addition to sanctions, there are other coercive economic activities available to the United States. On numerous occasions, the United States seized Iranian assets residing within U.S. grasp, or worked through other nations to freeze assets.[176] America also imposes trade restrictions on particular technologies. At present, Iran cannot legally purchase nuclear weapons related technology from anyone in the world. This forces Iran to acquire items illegally, which inflates the price and results in a sanction-like effect. The United States also remains a world leader in a variety of technologies that have dual-use. In some instances, the United States imposes restrictions on American companies to prevent them from selling to Iran. International

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[173]David Lerman, "U.S. Extends Iran-Oil Sanctions Exceptions for Nine Nations," *Bloomberg*, 7 December 2012, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-07/u-s-extends-iran-oil-sanctions-exceptions-for-nine-nations-1-.html (accessed 2 June 2013).

[174]Meghan L. O'Sullivan, *Shrewd Sanctions: Statecraft and State Sponsors of Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Brookings Inst Press, 2003), 26. O'Sullivan highlights a study, which found sanctions were successful in only 34 percent of cases.

[175]Ibid., 83-84.

[176]Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 248, 338.

trade agreements also prevent third parties located in other nations from purchasing and then reselling products to Iran.[177] However, what might prove the most significant economic effect on Iran is its lack of domestic oil refining capacity. A leading producer of crude oil worldwide, Iran is a net importer of refined petroleum products such as gasoline as it cannot get the support to modernize or build new refineries.[178]

The military element of national power is likely the most potent and simultaneously most dangerous tool available to the United States or any other nation. The potential for misunderstanding or misusing military activities can rapidly lead to unintended escalation. Regardless, America uses military activities and methods to send messages to the international community or when deemed appropriate to impose its will on others. The military acts in every region of the world to shape the security environment such that it supports U.S. policy objectives worldwide.[179] Presently, the United States regularly sends carrier battle groups into the Arabian Gulf and the Eastern Mediterranean to project American power.[180] The U.S. military also frequently engages in collaborative training and exercises globally while developing and fostering military-to-military ties both regionally (in the Middle East) as well as globally.[181]

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[177]Visual Compliance, "Iran Sanctions and Embargoes," eCustoms Incorporated, http://www.ecustoms.com/compliance_solutions/ofac_iransanctions.cfm?gclid=CNOEg7aW37g CFbCDQgodfXMAIw (accessed 31 July 2013).

[178]The Iran Primer, "The Oil and Gas Industry," United States Institute of Peace, http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/oil-and-gas-industry (accessed 31 July 2013). This suggests another opportunity to deny Iran necessary goods by working with countries supplying them with refined petroleum products.

[179]The Unified Command Plan (UCP) provides the Department of Defense biannual guidance on the responsibilities for each combatant commander.

[180]Robert Haddick, "This Week at War: Does the U.S. Need More Aircraft Carriers?," *Foreign Policy: Small Wars*, 25 May 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/ 2012/05/25/this_week_at_war_does_the_us_need_more_aircraft_carriers (accessed 1 August 2013).

[181]U.S. Special Forces regularly conduct exchange training with countries across the globe. Additionally, the Department of Defense runs regular exercises such as Cobra Gold in Asia

Given the U.S. military activity throughout the past decade and the potential for uncontrolled escalation, it is understandable that the United States uses this element of national power less in the case of Iran than in a case with different circumstances. Regardless, the circumstances surrounding the 1989 Iran Air flight and the initial response to the 2003 invasion of Iraq demonstrate that Iran is not immune to the effects the effective use of the U.S. military. The U.S. military also maintains offensive cyber capabilities that might target Iranian systems. It remains possible that military personnel were involved in the Stuxnet attack on Iran's centrifuge enrichment at Natanz.[182] Even the 1980 attempted hostage rescue demonstrated effectiveness in its ability to use covert action successfully.[183] Taking action in any realm beyond the standard scope of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic activities will incur considerable tactical and strategic risk. However, if America truly plans to prevent Iran from possessing a nuclear weapon, it must accept a level of risk commensurate with the task and consistent with the perception of the threat.

Options & Challenges

In order to prevent Iran from possessing a nuclear weapon, the United States must take holistic action with ends firmly in mind. It must recognize that coercion requires a conclusion from Iran that a nuclear weapon and regime perpetuation are incompatible. Additionally, the

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and until the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, the U.S. conducted biannual Bright Star exercises in Egypt.

[182]This is purely speculative and extrapolates on the espoused mission statement of the U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM).

[183]Alan Hoe, *The Quiet Professional: Major Richard J. Meadows of the U.S. Army Special Forces* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2011), 141-145. In support of the hostage rescue attempt, Richard "Dick" Meadows, a former U.S. Army Special Forces officer, infiltrated Iran to assist in setting up the internal support for the rescue mission. Meadows had retired and operated in a covert capacity, but this episode highlights options available for military or military-like activities. His purpose was not to foment unrest or take decisive action, but his individual success does shed light on options.

United States must determine what it will give in terms of concessions in demands in order to deny Iran a nuclear weapon as it cannot expect Iran to acquiesce on all points of contention.[184] This clarity will assist in meeting one of the preferred conditions of coercive diplomacy thereby enhancing chances of success. In addition, the United States must further explore available military options. Military activities can enhance or create their own effects, which mimics those of other national power elements. This bolsters overall impact, and provides broader, more intense pressure, which holds the best chance in attaining policy goals. Regardless, greater action – particularly by the U.S. military – incurs greater risk and creates additional challenges. The United States must accept these if the policy is worth fulfilling the goal of denying Iran a nuclear weapon. Likewise, this policy might require exceptions regarding other policies.

Iran disperses its nuclear program, and as such is not subject to peril with a single strike. The Islamic Republic has at least two uranium enrichment facilities, two partially developed nuclear reactors, a diffuse ballistic missile program, and what some believe is an explosives testing facility at the Parchin military base.[185] Additionally, given anticipated difficulty in achieving the necessary ends of the strategy, the United States must buy time. Attacks or subversive acts at any one location might achieve this end in some capacity, but to create strategic effects activity must occur across the program extending beyond physical facilities as information and other resources are just as critical to the program.

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[184]"Iran—Constitution," Chapter 10, Articles 152 and 153 speak to the Islamic Republic's concerns over sovereignty and the freedom of outside interference.

[185]"PBS Newshour," Key Iran Maps, 27 July 2013, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/ indepth_coverage/middle_east/iran/map.html (accessed 27 July 2013); Simon Sturdee, "IAEA Accuses Iran of Stalling Nuclear Probe at Parchin Military Base," *Middle East Online*, 3 June 2013, http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=59202 (accessed 27 July 2013); David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, "Parchin: Possible Nuclear Weapons-Related Site in Iran," (Washington, DC: Institute for Science and International Security, 15 September 2004), http://isis-online.org/publications/iran/parchin.html (accessed 27 July 2013).

Production of precision parts of the necessary tolerance for the components of a nuclear weapon requires either vast expertise or experience or specialized equipment such as computer numerical control (CNC) machines.[186] Additionally, such specialized equipment requires particular computer software to run properly.[187] Processes such as centrifuge enrichment demand specialty metals production and processes to generate the metallurgical qualities necessary to enrich uranium of the proper quality and purity. Rare earth metals also play a role in a number of nuclear weapons processes from enrichment to weapons production.[188] These are only a few of the items the U.S. could target. This sort of targeting has two sides. Iran likely has the items in the necessary abundance to get to a nuclear weapon without additional procurement. However, were on-hand quantities corrupted, destroyed or otherwise rendered unusable, Iran would need to look externally to replace them.[189] This would create opportunities for the United States to interrupt the supply chain.

For instance, Iran currently has sufficient uranium hexafluoride (UF6) to produce multiple nuclear weapons.[190] However, this asset is finite and subject to contamination.[191]

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[186]Andrew Koch and Jeanette Wolf, "Iran's Nuclear Procurement Program: How Close to the Bomb?" *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall, 1997, 126, http://cns.miis.edu/npr/pdfs/koch51.pdf (accessed 31 July 2013).

[187]Supervisory control and data acquisition, or SCADA, is the name typically given to these systems. The Stuxnet virus exploited this area of vulnerability in the alleged attacked at Natanz.

[188]Enrichment centrifuges use rare earth metals in their components. The metals also play a role in the manufacture of electronics components and other elements of warhead design.

[189]James Risen, *State of War: the Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 208-09; David Albright et al., *Preventing Iran from Getting Nuclear Weapons: Constraining Its Future Nuclear Options* (Washington, DC: Institute for Science and International Security, 2012), 14, http://www.isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/USIP_Template_5March2012-1.pdf (accessed 27 July 2013).

[190]David Albright, Paul Brannan, and Christina Warlond, *ISIS Analysis of IAEA Iran Safeguards Report: Production of 20% Enriched Uranium Triples Advanced Centrifuge Program Appears Troubled; Iran Increases Number of Enriching Centrifuges at Natanz FEP by Nearly 50% and Signals an Intention to Greatly Expand the Number of Centrifuges at Both Natanz and*

Creation of a nuclear weapon from highly enriched uranium (HEU) requires a densification of material to create a critical mass such that a sustainable chain reaction occurs. Efficient weapons designs accomplish this using explosives detonated in a particular manner. Furthermore, many designs also incorporate a neutron generator. These maintain the chain reaction initiated by detonation of a nuclear device over time, which more efficiently uses HEU. Each of these areas, expertise and specialty equipment, high quality explosives, detonators, and neutron generators, have alternate uses in industry and are available for purchase through specialty vendors or highly specialized production facilities.[192] For the same reasons, these critical components serve as focal points when seeking to prolong Iran's timeline to develop a nuclear weapon fully.[193]

Beyond the development of a device capable of creating a nuclear yield, Iran likely requires a delivery device to feel it truly has a nuclear deterrent. A delivery mechanism can take the form of an air-droppable bomb, or more likely, a ballistic missile. Mating a ballistic missile with a nuclear device is not a plug-and-play endeavor. Where a typical explosive warhead has greater flexibility in size and shape, a nuclear device has a number of components that are less scalable particularly for a nation with only a nascent program. This payload alteration forces additional testing and adjustment to account for changes in shape, weight distribution and other

Fordow, (Washington, DC: Institute for Science and International Security, 2012), http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/ISIS_Analysis_IAEA_Rerport_24Feb2012.pdf (accessed 15 July 2013). UF6 is the material enriched in centrifuges to create HEU.

[191]Geoff Forden, "Fun with Molybdenum," *Arms Control Wonk*, 7 October 2009, http://forden.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/2496/fun-with-molybdenum (accessed 27 July 2013). Dr. Forden is a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and previously served as a strategic weapons analyst at the Congressional Budget Office. The discussion on the blog highlights aspects for further exploration in developing methods of adulteration.

[192]A number of industries use specialty explosives in processes where environmental sensitivity is critical. The oil industry uses neutron generators for exploration purposes. Detonators, particularly multi-point detonation systems (MDS), are common in the mining industry.

[193]It remains feasible Iran could create these products internally, but their continued attempts to gain access to non-indigenous sources illicitly suggests otherwise.

factors that affect telemetry and guidance. Again, this may provide an opportunity for the U.S. to take action, which gains time and leverage against Iran.[194] However, the material side is not the only vulnerability to Iran's nuclear program.

An aspect of any technological endeavor is the science and engineer supporting it. This expertise can reside in data stored on a computer, but it also resides with highly skilled people. This knowledge base stems from years of dedicated study and is difficult to replace if lost. Taking action against individuals is a risky venture at both the tactical and strategic level, but may prove effective in denying Iran critical competencies necessary for its nuclear weapons program. Regardless, there is more than one approach to this denial of expertise. Individuals can become targets with lethal means.[195] People are also potential targets for coercion or inducement at an individual level. Just as American scientists and engineers abroad travel to myriad locations to learn and interact with their peers at conferences or symposia, so do foreign experts. When such events occur in a neutral location, the opportunity might present itself to influence key Iranians such that they choose not to return to Iran. Alternatively, they may decide it is best to no longer work for the Islamic Republic in the nuclear field. Individuals are susceptible to discrediting using other means. More than a few Americans of note drew undesired attention stemming from

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[194]David Sanger and William Broad, "Explosion Seen as Big Setback to Iran's Missile Program," *New York Times*, 4 December 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/05/world/ middleeast/blast-leveling-base-seen-as-big-setback-to-iran-missiles.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed 5 June 2013). There is no indication the event at the missile plant was foul play, but the incident does identify how elements of a program are with reach of a campaign to slow development.

[195]David Blair, "Iran Nuclear Scientist Dead," *Telegraph*, 11 January 2012, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9007304/Iran-nuclear-scientist-dead-mysterious-recent-deaths-and-disappearances.html (accessed 5 June 2013). This approach may prove difficult to justify to the decision maker, oversight bodies, or the general population were they aware.

poor judgment in personal internet communications.[196] The options to discredit individuals are vast and could prove effective when creating a situation as simple as distrust between the regime and the individual such that the regime removes them from the program.[197] These options, focused on a few key individuals or components to Iran's nuclear weapons program, can certainly delay Iran's attainment of a weapon if acted upon broadly enough and quickly enough. However, they all serve as only a means of buying time. Long-term policy success will only come with a change in the will of the Iranian leadership.

To change Iran's will, the United States must communicate with the regime or elements therein. Given Iran's sense of pride, the communication must occur in a manner that avoids putting the regime in a position that it might lose prestige with the Iranian people or with the international community were it to acquiesce. This will allow Iranian decision makers the necessary time and space to adjust their positions to a new policy. The United States can also look to create fractures among the factions that allow Khamenei to maintain power. This will reduce his options for balancing power among disparate groups and increase pressure, which will undermine Iranian resolve to produce nuclear weapons. Regardless, the United States must act decisively, engage in firm and credible dialogue, and stand willing to use force.

Engaging Iran and finding the proper pressure points also requires an understanding of how Ayatollah Khamenei makes decisions. History suggests he takes different approaches depending on the situation.[198] In critical situations, it seems apparent that Khamenei takes on a rational actor approach and builds consensus around his decision. In others, he takes a more

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[196]U.S. Representative Anthony Weiner and General David Petraeus both lost credibility in the public eye due to indiscretions brought to light via the internet or other electronic media.

[197]This is a rather simple example and intended as such. Further elaboration might prove too graphic.

[198]Green, Wehrey, and Wolf, *Understanding Iran*, 9. Green, Wehrey, and Wolf suggest the themes of justice, Islam, independence, and self-sufficiency frame this aspect of Khamenei.

organizational approach if sufficient inertia exists around options on a situation that centers on a more peripheral issue. In still other circumstances, Khamenei allows politics to play out. This seemed to be the case when he allowed President Ahmadinejad and the majles to fight out domestic policy issues.[199] Regardless the approach, the central aspect remains Khamenei's ties to the Islamic Republic's foundation in velayat-e faqih or "guardianship of the jurist," which Khomeini derived and Khamenei studied as a pupil and government official under the first Supreme Leader.[200]

Publicly the United States must become more inclusive and positive in its approach and look to engage Iran openly. The public openness with tangible offers will put pressure on Iran internally. The United States cannot look to negotiate with Iran without providing a degree of relief from sanctions or other coercive measures. The United States tried this approach previously and Ayatollah Khamenei used it as talking points when taking the debate to the Iranian people.[201]

CONCLUSION

There are no easy solutions to Iran's willful pursuit of nuclear weapons. If Iran perceives a legitimate need based on concerns over stability, perpetuation of the regime, and freedom from

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[199]Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson, 1999). Allison and Zelikow use the rational actor, organizational behavior, and governmental politics models to describe U.S. decisionmaking during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The models used are not necessarily transferable to the Iran situation due to the context, but provide worthwhile starting points for more nuanced analysis when seeking the proper pressure points to address to achieve a desired result.

[200]Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei*, 4-7. Sadjadpour points out Khamenei's long study and following of Ayatollah Khomeini; Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 124-25. Nasr frames the underpinnings of velayat-e faqih around the ulamic protectorate of Islamic rule for the return of the Twelfth Imam. This provides a centrality to the power of the Supreme Leader making it difficult for dissent from his leadership.

[201]Reza Sayah and Shirzad Bozorgmehr, "Supreme Leader: U.S. Pressuring Iran on Talks," *CNN,* 7 February 2013, http://www.cnn.com/2013/02/07/world/meast/iran-khamenei-dismiss (accessed 27 July 2013). In a press conference with the Iranian media, Khamenei suggested the U.S. was holding a gun to Iran's head to have direct talks.

external interference, it will likely continue given the current situation. [202] The West, particularly the United States, imposes a great deal of external pressure. Other Middle Eastern nations refuse to recognize what Iran sees as its rightful place in the region. Internally, dissent periodically festers to the point the regime must respond to reestablish control. Heavy-handed domestic responses to unrest and continued support to terrorist organizations or the Assad Regime in Syria suggest external pressures remain insufficient to induce Iran to conform to other international norms or halt its nuclear weapons related activities.

However, if external parties can create conditions necessary to convince Iran to abandon its pursuits, the U.S. will certainly play a major role. To do so, it must stand willing to take greater risk. [203] Additionally, to do such a thing outside the public eye in denied locations or in locations where U.S. action is illegal and unwanted will undoubtedly require some form of covert action at great cost and significant time. To gain access to systems and people or to change their minds and perceptions takes time, focus, and a holistic approach antithetical to individual selections from a discrete list of activities. [204]

The United States has additional tools available across the elements of national power to enhance coercive pressure on the Iranian regime. It must piece together capabilities in a cogent manner that creates momentum toward the strategy's end state. [205] Furthermore, the unique

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[202]Comparison of the last several IAEA reports and Iran's refusal to allow access to sites such as Parchin indicate both continued work and progress.

[203]Risk here means accepting potential condemnation by groups at home and abroad regarding the methods used. It also includes drawing on the resources of potential partners such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, or any other nation sufficiently committed to denying Iran a nuclear weapon.

[204]Discrete actions must reinforce one another. The effort to halt the program is a campaign, which requires logical connection directed to the endstate. Discreet actions selected from a "menu" are just as likely to prove counterproductive.

[205]The "menu of options" approach is likely to run into problems were more time available. The discreet actions taken must reinforce one another. The effort to halt the program is

capabilities of the military remain relatively untapped. When properly employed, these resources can create effects across the spectrum and heighten pressures through overt, covert, or clandestine activities, which will bolster actions taken in other areas.[206] This will add both breadth and depth to the currently strategy. Likewise, collaborative action from across the interagency can play a significant role. Regardless, risk acceptance must increase if success is possible.

Iran has means to take action against America if it becomes necessary. Iranian intelligence and other agents operate globally, but have particularly good access in the Middle East.[207] Previous attacks demonstrate they will take retaliatory or even preemptive action against U.S. interests. The United States must prepare to seek out and counter these threats, preemptively if necessary, to demonstrate resolve. This more aggressive approach will bolster capability and will perceptions of the U.S. strategy while reinforcing to Iran that it still has something to lose thereby increasing opportunities to succeed.[208]

The preceding analysis of the U.S. strategy and the recommendations to fill the existing gaps might still fall short of realizing U.S. policy goals. However, assuming greater risk in this area provides the United States opportunities moving forward. First, it positions the United States to implement a strategy of deterrence more quickly and effectively should coercive diplomacy fail. Additionally, it likely positions U.S. resources in a better posture to counter any Iranian

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a campaign, which requires logical connection directed to the endstate. Discreet actions "cherry picked" from a "menu" are just as likely to prove counterproductive.

[206]"Across the spectrum" refers to using the military in a manner that has effects in other domains such as economics or information.

[207]Greg Bruno, Jayshree Bajoria, and Jonathan Masters, "Iran's Revolutionary Guard," Council on Foreign Relations, 14 June 2013, under "International Activities," http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-revolutionary-guards/p14324 (accessed 31 July 2013).

[208]Ongoing support by Iran to the Assad regime coupled with the lack of follow-through (thus far) regarding Syrian use of chemical weapons as a "red line" continues to draw U.S. will and resolve into question.

attempts to proliferate nuclear technology. This more aggressive approach might also escalate the

situation earlier rather than later. If America must engage Iran in any armed conflict, it seems

logical it would hope to do so before Iran becomes a nuclear power. Finally, the heightened risk

assumed by expanding the ways and means of the existing strategy should send a clear message

as to U.S. resolve, which may add some level of protection to U.S. citizens and interests both at

home and abroad.

Regardless of the rhetoric by either the United States or Iran, the nature of international politics

suggests a deal may prove possible. This will require a delicate approach outside the public

sphere, but might allow both sides to save face. Iran will not accept a public defeat without a

fight. National pride fostered by the Supreme Leader and his supporting power structure demand

it.[209] Regardless, the Ayatollah did issue a fatwa banning nuclear weapons in Iran.[210] This offers a

window whereby Iran may accept an offer to become a 'virtual' nuclear weapons state, while

maintaining public prestige.[211] Even this possibility still draws concerns.[212] Nevertheless, to

capitalize on this possibility, the United States must likely temper its public tone and begin an

active dialogue in earnest while allowing Iran to assist in setting the conditions for a settlement. A

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[209]Sadjadpour, "Understanding Ayatollah Khamenei," 94.

[210]Associated Press, "Iran: Religious Decree Against Nuclear Weapons is Binding," CBSNews.com, 15 January 2013, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57564199/iran-religious-decree-against-nuclear-weapons-is-binding/ (accessed 31 July 2013).

[211]Steven Aftergood and Jonathan Garbose, "Nuclear Weapons Program," Federation of American Scientists, 1 June 2012, http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/japan/nuke/ (accessed 31 July 2013). Aftergood and Garbose highlight the aspects of Japan's nuclear program in this regard. Specifically, they explain that Japan has the resources to develop a nuclear weapon and could likely produce a functioning weapon within a year. Accordingly, they provide, "on the strength of its nuclear industry, and its stockpile of weapons-useable plutonium, Japan in some respects considers itself, and is treated by others as, as a virtual nuclear weapons state."

[212]Nuclear Threat Initiative, ""Virtual" Nuclear Powers a Looming Threat, ElBaradei Warns," *Global Security Newswire*, 15 May 2009, http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/virtual-nuclear-powers-a-looming-threat-elbaradei-warns/ (accessed 31 July 2013).

dictate from anyone outside the Islamic Republic demanding a halt can only serve to strengthen

its resolve.

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